Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluating the utility of early laboratory monitoring of antiretroviral-induced haematological and hepatic toxicity in HIV-infected persons in Cameroon

Version: 2 Date: 15 August 2014

Reviewer: Elly Katabira

Reviewer’s report:

This is an important study which rightly evaluates whether it is clinically and economically useful to do liver enzymes and haematological tests two weeks after initiating ART in Cameroon. The data is obtained from a retrospective cohort of a regional hospital with experience in HIV care since 2005.

Concerns:

1. Table 1: (Baseline characteristics of study participants) – the totals given varies widely ranging from 154 to 102. There is no mention of missing numbers so it is difficult to know whether the participants who were assessed for liver enzymes and haematological investigations were the same.

2. It is noted that the liver enzymes laboratory parameters after 2 weeks showed abnormalities even though not statistically significant with ALAT. If one accepts the argument that the possibility of these abnormalities (LEE) being caused by ART is negligible (line 247), then, in order to influence ART policy change in Cameroon, one need to provide an alternative period when these tests should be done if not at 2 weeks after ART initiation. Unfortunately there is no discussion on this point as no data was collected to generate necessary evidence.

I agree and support the conclusions made on the haematological findings.

The authors must respond to the two concerns above before a publication decision is made.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.