Reviewer's report

Title: Safety and efficacy of a caspofungin-based combination therapy for treatment of proven or probable aspergillosis in pediatric hematological patients

Version: Date: 15 January 2007

Reviewer: John R Wingard

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. This observational study does not allow one to ascertain if the combination is any better than the monotherapy without caspofungin. This should be explicitly stated in the discussion.
2. p8: how many pts received itraconazole? Were they given a polyene or voriconazole and what was the response?
3. p8: how many received a lipid amphot empirically before diagnosis, and at what dose, and what were they given for treatment (polyene or voriconazole)?
4. State the criteria used for failure and after how many days. Clinical symptoms often are slow to respond and radiography typically worsens during the first 7-10 days and these criteria cannot be reliably used to declare failure. These points need to be addressed in the discussion.
5. The fact that there was no difference in early or late start of caspofungin as to response rate suggests that the addition of caspofungin did not play a role in whether or not the pt responded.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.