Reviewer's report

Title: Utility of CD4 cell counts for early prediction of virological failure during antiretroviral therapy in a resource-limited setting

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Reviewer: Luc Kestens

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript discusses the utility of CD4 cell counts for early prediction of virological failure during antiretroviral therapy in a resource-limited setting. In essence, this is a retrospective study on an existing data set from patients who accessed ART through participation in multicentre phase III clinical trials.

As could be expected from available published data, CD4 counts turned out to be a poor surrogate marker for viral load monitoring and detection of virological failure. It is important that clinicians should know and understand the limited clinical value of CD4 count as surrogate marker for monitoring virological failure. Although papers with negative messages are generally less appealing, this clearly written paper is based on a relative large data set and applied thorough statistical analysis and the negative results conclusive.

What next?: Accept without revision

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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