Reviewer's report

**Title:** High dose prolonged treatment with nitazoxanide is not effective for cryptosporidiosis in HIV positive Zambian children: a randomised controlled trial

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 4 September 2009

**Reviewer:** saul tzipori

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The manuscript by Amadi and her colleagues evaluated the clinical and parasitological benefits of NTZ treatment in children with HIV/AIDS and cryptosporidiosis. This is a well designed and conducted clinical investigation, with a comprehensive and complete data analysis and sound conclusions. This publication unequivocally confirms earlier indications by the same group and by others including studies in animals that while NTZ may be beneficial in shortening the course of an acute cryptosporidiosis, it is ineffective against chronic infections. Animal studies have shown that the drug does reduce the parasitological burden, but is unable to completely eradicate chronically established infections. This study demonstrates this in children with HIV/AIDS and cryptosporidiosis even when higher doses and longer course of treatment were used. A few comments that could improve the presentation:

1) It was difficult to figure out the exact administered dose – it should be stated in mg/kg body weight in divided doses. The dose given and the duration should be included in the Abstract to reflect and support the title of the paper.

2) The investigation would have benefited had they determined species of the Cryptosporidium isolates from these individuals. It would have provided useful information on the relationship between parasite species, response to treatment and the nature of the clinical manifestation.

3) Throughout the paper they use the term C. parvum which is incorrect since they did not perform genotyping on the isolates. The chances are that the majority of isolates probably are C. hominis. I suggest they use the term Cryptosporidium spp.

This is an important communication which substantiates the often repeated statement that there is no effective treatment against cryptosporidiosis.

**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 have no competing interests