Reviewer's report

Title: Clinical and Ultrasonographic Features of Abdominal Tuberculosis in HIV Positive Adults in Zambia

Version: 1 Date: 21 November 2008

Reviewer: Robert J Wilkinson

Reviewer's report:

This is a manuscript that describes the features of abdominal tuberculosis in HIV infected people. 'Gold' standard diagnostic techniques of colonoscopy and laparoscopy combined with liquid culture in order to define potential markers that do not require invasive investigation.

The manuscript is well-written and the introduction sets out its objectives well in the context of the field as a whole. The manuscript makes teh important point that abdominal tuberculosis is common, often occult and that ultrasound features are of helping in making a diagnosis. I have only minor comments.

Minor essential revisions

1. The exclusion of patients who had been treated for tuberculosis for more than one week or those too sick to undergo laparoscopy might well have led to an underestimate of adominal tuberculosis. I note this is discussed.

2. I would spell out which other IRBs approved the study

Discretionary revisions

1. Some may wish to know whether antiretroviral therapy was available to those eligible for this treatment

2. Pancreatic involvement was not found. Was the serum lipase or amylase determined systematically?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests