Reviewer's report

Title: Total protein, albumin and low-molecular-weight protein excretion in HIV-positive patients

Version: 2 Date: 2 April 2012

Reviewer: Michelle Estrella

Reviewer's report:

1) Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract: Authors should define "elevated protein", "elevated albumin excretion", and "elevated RBP" mean. It would also be of interest to provide the OR estimates from the multivariate analyses. The last conclusion statement is over-reaching since no statistically significant difference was noted among the drug groups with regards to RBP.

Methods - Definitions: The authors chose an usual cutoff of 150 mg/g to define proteinuria; this cutoff should be justified in some way.

Also, "albuminuria" and "microalbuminuria" diverge from the conventional cutoffs of >300 mg/g and 30-300 mg/g, respectively. "Microalbuminuria" in this study actually represents individuals with normal levels of albumin excretion. The cutoffs they used should also be justified. Also, it's unclear why the authors chose sex-specific cutoffs for "albuminuria", but not "microalbuminuria".

Methods - Statistical analyses: The authors need to clarify how covariates were chosen for inclusion in the multivariate models.

Results: The authors need to clarify whether the logistic models for NGALCR and CCR were multivariate. If not, why were they not adjusted models.

Discussion: The authors findings are difficult to interpret, esp. in light of previous studies, given their definition of microalbuminuria. The authors should re-analyze their data using more conventional cutoffs for microalbuminuria.

The authors observed poor correlation between NGAL and RBPCR which they purport are both markers of tubular function; however, they did not provide an explanation as to why they found such a poor correlation in the discussion section.

2) Minor Essential Revisions

Discussion: The authors should be consistent in the units they use for the various labs (e.g. RBPCR ug/g or ug/mmol?)

Table 4 - Authors should clarify whether the NGALCR and the CCR logistic models are crude or adjusted.
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests’ below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.