Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of oral supplementation with a combination of beta-hydroxy-beta-methylbutyrate, arginine and glutamine on wound healing: A retrospective analysis of diabetic haemodialysis patients

Version: 4 Date: 30 November 2012

Reviewer: John Rathmacher

Reviewer's report:

Editorial Adviser's Comments:

I have to agree with the reviewers that this manuscript is poorly written and needs to be checked for grammatical and topographical errors. I also agree with reviewer 3 that the manuscript was poorly referenced. Many of the references do not support their use in the manuscript. However, I do not agree with reviewer 3’s statement about reference 7. The implanted plastic tubes is well documented model for studying wound healing in humans and rodents. I only partially agree with reviewer 3’s comments about reference 6. I agree there is no data on wound healing but the reference is more than just about muscle. I think the authors intended to use it in reference to HMB as a metabolite of the amino acid leucine.

Receiver 3 stated that “The design of the study is said to be retrospective and therefore did not require ethical approval. However written informed consent was obtained from the patients – I don’t understand this at all.” I tend to agree with this comment. This study would be best described as case studies as presented. The study would be stronger if they had 11 subject that were not given Abound.

I disagree with reviewer 3’s comment that the conclusion is not support by the data. However, the authors did a poor job analyzing and presenting the data. I statistically analyzed the wound appear score and wound depth score using a pair-ttest and there were statistical improvements in the wound appearance score and wound depth score (see table below).

In summary, the authors need to address the many grammatical and typographical errors, address the use of the references which were not appropriate, consult with a statistician on the wound appearance and wound depth scores, and address why they obtained consent from subjects used in a retrospective study.