Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of Simvastatin on Bone Markers in Osteopenic Women: A Placebo-controlled, Dose-ranging Trial

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Reviewer: Prof CW Lam

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Reject because scientifically unsound

1. The work, method and results are very similar to a recently published paper: "Chan MHM, Mak TWL, VChiu RWK et al. Simvastatin increases serum osteocalcin concentration in patients treated for hypercholesterolaemia. Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism 2001; 86:4556-9. (I am the corresponding author of this paper)

The findings of Hsia et al. were identical to those of Chan et al. except that Chan et al. used one additional marker of bone formation, osteoclastin, and found increased serum concentration in Simvastatin- treated patients.

Thus there is now no new information from the study of Hsia et al. and it is regrettable that they have chosen only bone-specific alkaline phosphatase instead of osteoclastin which can be easily measured also.

2. As discussed by Hsia et al., the sample size of 8 subjects per group tends to be small and this might have affected the statistical analysis and the conclusions.

Otherwise the manuscript has been well written.

Competing interests:

None declared.