Reviewer’s report

Title: Effectiveness of Chinese herbal medicine for impaired glucose tolerance

Version: 2 Date: 27 August 2012

Reviewer: Gurjeet Birdee

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript reports the findings a randomized clinical trial of a Chinese herb on patients with pre-diabetes and mild diabetes to test the effect of herb on primarily glucose outcome.

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. Methods: First paragraph, defining “mild” diabetes. Recognizing that the authors have defined mild diabetes for the purposes of the study, it would be helpful to state what “controlled” diabetes was defined as. I do not think the temporal description “early” is appropriate (appears in abstract and conclusion), as diabetes for 5 years is significant (especially since many people are diabetic for several years prior to diagnosis).
2. Methods: 4th paragraph, Herbal intervention: More information should be given regarding the herb. Where was this herb produced? If by a company, which company? How was it manufactured, and how was quality assured?
3. Methods: 4th paragraph: Patients were asked not to alter their diet or exercise and this was monitored. Since this was monitored, and this is an important confounder to a diabetes study, please report this data if available in results section
4. Methods, statistical analysis: Glycemic control can be measured by fasting blood glucose or hemoglobin A1c. It is not stated in the methods if one measure was decided as the primary outcome of the study, or both.
5. Results: Please include differences in BMI and HOMA in table 1. These appear to be different between treatment groups.
6. Discussion: Please not the large difference in standard deviation for insulin levels in the placebo group. Discuss why the variance. How will this affect your interpretation of the results in your conclusion?

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. Abstract: Methods section: second sentence incomplete, “At baseline and outcome a well being….”
2. Abstract: Results, 2nd sentence with two periods.
3. Abstract: Results, put in insulin resistance data if room.

Discretionary Revisions
1. Introduction, 2nd paragraph: Authors use the term, “strong anecdotal”. I have
never found anecdotal evidence to be strong. That is why we do clinical trials.

2. Introduction, 2nd paragraph: It would be helpful to state if the meta-analysis included or did not include the Chinese herb Jiangtang Xiaozhi.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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