Reviewer's report

**Title:** Cost-minimization analysis of TPE and IVIg in the treatment of Guillain-Barre syndrome

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 30 November 2010

**Reviewer:** Djillali Annane

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors are reporting a cost minimization analysis suggesting that in GBS patients treatment with 5 plasma exchanges was less expensive than 5 days IVIg (2g/kg), saving roughly 5000$ per patient of 70 kg body weight. In the current economic context, these findings are potentially very relevant for clinical practice.

Comment 1

The main issue relates to the fact that the authors compared only direct cost. In this reviewer's opinion, the primary comparison should be total cost and then direct and indirect costs separately.

Comment 2

Though systematic reviews and meta-analysis found that plasma exchanges and IVIg had similar effects on recovering muscle strength and function, they also showed that there were more patients relapsing within the first year in the TPE treated patients. This higher relapsing rate may increase treatment costs.

Comment 3

RCTs also suggested that in GBS patients who did not loss the capability to walk, 2 sessions of TPE are sufficient and in the remainders 4 sessions had similar effects than 6 sessions. Thus, the total number of TPE may likely be further reduced lowering associated cost.

Comment 4

The authors have made the assumption that substitution fluids for TPE included albumin and crystalloids. Nevertheless, a number of institution are now using albumin and synthetic colloids mainly starch solution. This practice may likely increase the cost of TPE.

It may be worth for the authors to present sensitivity analyses using the different scenario for the practical modalities of TPE (i.e. varying the number of sessions and varying the type of fluids substitution).

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable
Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

none