Reviewer's report

Title: Micronutrient Levels and Nutritional status of School Children Living in Northwest Ethiopia

Version: 1 Date: 2 October 2012

Reviewer: Shakira Nelson

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Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. Under 'collection of stool specimens and examination for helminths' the authors stated that subjects found to be positive for intestinal parasites were given anti-parasite chemotherapy. Can authors discuss why anti-parasite chemotherapy was used over alternative methods? Would this method cause any of the physical changes seen in the subjects (i.e. stunted growth, weight loss, etc).

2. The authors should provide data showing if a deficiency in any of the micronutrients leads to a greater infection of a certain parasite. This data would provide another layer to strengthen the data found.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Multiple spelling mistakes throughout the paper. One that sticks out is school children. It is spelled two different ways in the paper: school children and schoolchildren. Needs to be corrected and kept consistent.

Spelling mistakes on pages: 7, change none-contaminated to non-contaminated; 10, change health burden to health burdens; 11 (paragraph beginning the prevalence of underweight...) change indicates to indicating; 12 (paragraph beginning with Magnesium) change study to studies; 12 (paragraph beginning with The present study) change occurring to occurred.

2. Sentence structure needs to be fixed. On page 11, the sentence that begins with 'the prevalence of underweight in the present study' does not read clearly.

3. On page 14, the paragraph beginning with 'it is interesting to note that' should be as follows: It is interesting to note that the determination of the copper/zinc ratio has been considered helpful in reflecting the nutritional status of zinc in the human body, better than its content in serum [65]. It was also suggested that the copper/zinc ratio have diagnostic and prognostic values; if the ratio of copper/zinc exceeds 2 (Table 2 & 3), it would indicate severity of the infection [65]. In the present study, the ratio of copper/zinc was higher in serum of school children with severe nutritional status.

4. On page 10, the authors state 'deficiency for both selenium and zinc was observed in 34% of the school children'. However, this data was not clearly
shown in Table 4. Please include in the table, or say “data not shown”.

5. Statistics used throughout the manuscript look correct and display the proper significant differences.

Discretionary Revisions
None to report

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have not, in the past five years, received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that may lose or gain financially from the publication of this manuscript, nor will I in the future.

I do not hold any stocks or shares in any organization that may gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript.

I do not nor will I apply for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript. I have not received reimbursements, fees, funding or salary from any organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript.

I have no financial competing interests.

I have no non-financial competing interests.

I declare that I have no competing interests.