Reviewer's report

Title: Dynamics of Vitamin D in Stable Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease and their Families

Version: 1 Date: 8 August 2013

Reviewer: Andrew S Day

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript by Grunbaum and colleagues assessed vitamin D levels in several key groups

Specific Comments:

1. A number of areas of the manuscript are unclear and require revision (and shortening) to enhance readability and clarity.

2. The Introduction suggests and CD and UC are leading contenders - but it does not indicate what they are contenders for.

3. The Aims at the end of the Introduction should be rewritten to the past tense only

4. The selection of first degree family members (by the patient or control subject) introduces bias that is not considered.

5. The Methods indicates that patients who are "stable" or with mild activity were included. Is the word stable to indicate those in remission? or those with stable disease regardless of the degree of activity? Further those with mild disease should be excluded in the concept is to examine patients who are in remission.

6. In addition, remission is documented only with clinical indices (subjective). The authors should include an impression of biological remission (e.g. even CRP level) to assess remission. Clearly clinical symptoms are not good indicators of remission.

7. Under clinical assessment BMI is incorrectly defined. Please correct this

8. In regards the number of patients included. It is unclear why the authors included 13 patients with no vitamin measurements, given that this was the crux of their assessment. This should be reconsidered.

9. Evidently none of the patients with CD had upper gut involvement - had all patients undergone upper endoscopy to confirm this?

10. It is unclear why the control subjects should be having a different rate of supplementation, given that all are in effect control subjects.

11. In the correlations section, the authors suggest that a p value is nearly significant. A relationship is either significant (i.e. p <0.05) or not, there should not be any inbetween.

12. The Discussion does not have any heading (page 15)
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests