Reviewer’s report

Title: Efficacy of different strategies to treat anemia in children: A randomized clinical trial.

Version: 2 Date: 19 April 2010

Reviewer: Teresa M Kemmer

Reviewer’s report:

Progress has been made but in the present form, it is not ready for acceptance for publication.

Grammar and punctuation throughout are still not at an acceptable level for publication. In general, the manuscript still requires major work. Items that authors stated were addressed or corrected within the first revision were not all completed or were not completed throughout the manuscript.

Additional issues to address:

1. Objective of the study should be specific. Suggest begin sentences with: the objective of the study was...
2. Did not make correction of not using first person tense.
3. In abstract need to be specific when the dosing was given. ie daily.
4. Need to include the cut-off values used for total iron and ferritin in the abstract.
5. Should address the percentage within the population that are non-breastfed vs breastfed children since this is an issue with generalizability. Also need to let the reader know that if the child was formula fed, the percentage that were on iron fortified vs iron-free formula. Using only Non-BF infants should also be addressed in the limitations section.
6. Have not made corrections throughout manuscript of not beginning sentences with acronyms.
7. Need to make it very clear that the water is considered a fortified food in abstract as noted in the paper.
8. Within the conclusion: 1. Need to clarify what you mean by had higher increments in Hb. 2. As results are stated: ‘In general, the supplements were less acceptable than the food fortification strategies’. Need to clarify if the less acceptable by participants or by treatment outcome. The way it is written is not clear.
9. Still need to define 10 blocks of children.
10. Was enough of the water provided for food preparation of the whole family, only children, or only study participants and how did you confirm that it was used only for those intended?
11. You note that the presence of adverse events was recorded every week.
Why was this not done at each visit to minimize recall error.

12. Did not note in manuscript as stated in your comments that you included: WHO child growth standards were adapted appropriately using SPSS syntax based on whether or not the child length or height was used.

13. In the biochemical measurements section- Need to move the information on the cut-off values for total iron and ferritin to the area where they are being defined rather than after the CRP data.

14. Your definition of compliance is not clearly stated as written: ‘compliance was achieved when a child accomplished 4 months consuming treatment’. Compliance is not the correct word to use when referencing completing treatment. Also used in the Table 5.

15. Knee height is added to Table 4 but there is no mention of it in the methods or results section.

16. Figure 2. need to be specific in defining the a & b. Different from what?

17. Your numbers in figure 1 are not the same as those discussed in the paper. ie screened 577 vs 574?

18. Figure 2. If you have the bar for anemia you do not need the bar for non anemic.

19. Footnotes for figures do not include the abbreviations used so they need to be included since all tables and figures should be able to stand alone.

20. In your acknowledgements you use CRF’s and I did not identify where that was defined previously.

21. Still spelling out hemoglobin within sentence even after inserting abbreviation. Noted that this was fixed but it has not been completed.

21. In one section you use fortified foods and another you use fortified complementary foods does the later also include the water. Need to be consistent.

22. Still does not have a well stated strong conclusion. Conclusion should also include information about the generalizability of the results. I could not identify the sentence added that addresses what this research has contributed to science.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'