Reviewer's report

Title: Comparsion of heat-sensitive moxibustion versus fluticasone/salmeterol (seretide) combination in the treatment of chronic persistent asthma: design of a multicenter randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 13 October 2010

Reviewer: lawrence friedman

Reviewer's report:

a) The manuscript needs editing by a native English speaker. I started to edit it, but the number of changes became quite large, so we should ask the investigators to find someone to do that.

b) It is unclear what the primary outcome is, and at which time point it will be assessed. The paper lists several outcomes measured at several times, but the primary one should be clearly specified.

c) The analysis will include adjustment for baseline imbalances, but it is not clear if this is the primary or a secondary analysis.

d) 20% lost to follow-up is assumed for the sample size calculation, but how missing data will be handled is not clear. It is stated that an intention-to-treat analysis will be used, but given a 20% loss, how this will be done should be clarified.

e) It is stated that this will be a non-inferiority trial, but how the delta was selected should be stated.

f) Patients will be divided into three categories of asthma, but will they be stratified during randomization on those categories?

g) Rather than list the twelve clinical sites in the text, a table would be simpler.

h) The Abstract appears to assume the outcome (“… will provide evidence for the effectiveness …”) rather than express uncertainty.