Reviewer's report

Title: A pragmatic multi-centre randomised controlled trial of fluid loading and level of dependency in high-risk surgical patients undergoing major elective surgery: trial protocol.

Version: 1 Date: 23 March 2010

Reviewer: lawrence friedman

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a) A figure showing the number expected to be screened, eligible, randomized at each stage, and analyzed for each of the hypotheses would be helpful. This is particularly so because although the first paragraph under Data Analysis states that “analyses will be based on all people randomised,” the Abstract and the first paragraph under Sample Size suggests otherwise. Clarification of these apparent discrepancies would also be useful.

b) A table listing the inclusion criteria would be preferable than simply citing reference 10.

c) Because the trial is not blinded, what efforts are being made to be confident that outcome assessments, use of concomitant therapy, timing of hospital discharge, and other key measurements are not biased?

d) A minor issue: pagination would be helpful.