Reviewer's report

Title: Does Clinical Equipoise Apply to Cluster Randomized Trials?

Version: 1 Date: 18 January 2011

Reviewer: Charlie Goldsmith

Reviewer's report:

This paper is quite well done. However, here are a few comments that I hope will improve the paper.


2. Paragraph 3, line 9. Suggest adding [physician practices] as many CRTs ask them to change their behaviour with all their patients that are eligible. Also, sometimes another physician will as a physician to be involved in a trial on their patients and we should be able to deal with equipoise at the level each of these physicians. This seems to be missing from the paper at the moment.

3. Paragraph 4, line 1. Drop [In order] and capitalize [To] as the words are redundant in English. Also Paragraph 5, line 2. Also Paragraph 8, line 2. Also Paragraph 9, line 2. Also Paragraph 12, line 4. Also, Paragraph 17, lines 1, 3 and p 3, line 2. Also Paragraph 19, line 2. Also Paragraph 18, line 1 and 8. Also Paragraph 24, line 3.


5. Paragraph 2, line 3. Try to rewrite the text to be gender neutral. In this case suggest replacing [her] by [the].

6. Paragraph 5, line 2. This reviewer suggests that until the results are published, they may be incorrect and hence the physician-researcher could hold off providing to their patients. Should this not be included?

7. Paragraph 8, line 2. Drop [s] from [shows] to read [show] since data is a plural word.

8. Paragraph 8, line 3. Drop [s] from [provides] to read [provide] since data is a plural word.

9. Paragraph 11, line 5. Replace [is] by [are].


11. Paragraph 12, line 3, and paragraph 3, lines 4, 5, 10. More examples for gender neutral language.


13. Paragraph 16, line 4. Would it be useful to include [statistically] in front of [significant] to be clear? Also, Paragraph 17, line 2.
14. P 22, p 1, l 4. Suggest replacing [significant] by [clinically responsible] or [important].
16. P 25, p 2, l 2. Suggest replacing [significantly] by [dramatically] or some other word like it.

A random sample of 10 references was checked for accuracy. Also, this reviewer likes to see the issue number for all journals since it makes the article easier to find.

17. P 29, R(eference) 1 appears accurate, as well as R 19 and 23. I was not able to verify R 11.
18. P 29, R 2, l 2. Insert [(6)] after [10].
19. P 29, R 5, l 2. Trials likes to publish all authors on papers, so add [Zwarenstein M, Donner A].
20. P 29, R 7, l 2. Insert [(3)] after [20].
21. P 20, R 9. More should be provided for this important citation such as the MRC website and the country. I could locate [http://www.mrc.ac.uk] but not the exact URL to find it.
22. P 30, R 12, l 1. Insert [(2)] after [13].
23. P 30, R 18, l 2. Insert [(2)] after [34].