Reviewer's report

Title: Safety and Efficacy of miltefosine alone and in combination with sodium stibogluconate and liposomal amphotericin B for the treatment of primary visceral leishmaniasis in East Africa: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 15 April 2011

Reviewer: Charlie Goldsmith

Reviewer's report:

Comments to authors:

Number the pages form 1 to 16.
1. Page, authors, line 3 and Correspondence, line 1. Why is the name listed as [Ahmed Musa] on line 3 while [Ahmed Musa Mudawi] on line 1? Are they the same person, and if so, why not the same name?
2. Paragraph 2, lines 8 and 9. Always insert a space between an inequality and a number, i.e., [< 75] and [> 90].
3. Paragraph 2, line 4. Insert the date of registration as well as the date of the first patient randomized and the date of the last patient entered if these have happened.
5. Paragraph 4, lines 1. The word [proportion] is interchanged with reports in percentages. Do you think these two concepts should be kept distinct? Consider changing the word to [percentage]. Also Paragraph 5, line 5 and line 8, line 1.
6. Paragraph 4, line 3. What is being done to ensure that exactly one envelope is opened for each eligible patient? Do you also plan to report the integrity of the randomization as part of the study report?
7. Paragraph 4, line 6. Add an [s] to [day] to read [days].
8. Paragraph 5, lines 1 and 5. Rewrite as [haemoglobin < 5], [WBC < 1], and [platelets < 40,000]. See # 2 above.
9. Paragraph 5, line 6. Did you consider making these standard across the two countries? If not, why not?
10. Paragraph 5, line 4. Is there a plan to get assent from the children?
12. Paragraph 5, line 5. The sample size does not justify any of the choices the investigators made to choose the sample size, and they are not referenced. Was a software package used to compute the sample size and will the same one be used to do the analysis? These should be specified.
13. Paragraph 5, line 3. Make the upper case [N] into lower case [n], times 3. Samples are always lower case while populations are upper case.
14. Paragraph 6, line 1. Make a distinction between estimates and parameters.
15. P 6, p 3, last l. Insert a [.] after [210] to read [210.].

16. P 6, p 4, l 5. Choosing the constant as [1.96] suggests that the distribution is normally distributed. Can this be documented in the literature?

17. P 7, p 1, l 2,3. Replace [range] by [interval]. A range is the length of an interval. Also on l 3, was a method that does not need truncated values looked for instead of using truncation?

18. P 7, p 2, l 3. Rewrite as [# 90].


20. P 7, p 3, l 3. What level of significance will be used here?

21. P 7, p 8. Are you planning to measure compliance with usual as well as study medications?

22. P 7, p 9, l 6. Rewrite as [# 7].

23. P 8, p 1, l 10. These covariates should be specified either here or in the data analysis section. How does one know they are appropriate?

24. P 8, p 6, l 13. What will be done about unusual values detected at the time of analysis?

25. P 9, p 4, l 8. Suggest inserting [completed] between [and] and [CRFs].

26. P 9, p 5. Mention is made here of a [DSMB]; however, its composition and powers are not outlined or referenced.

27. P 10, p 1, l 10. Drop [In order] and capitalize [To] as the words are redundant in English.

28. P 11, p 3 twice, 5 twice 6 once and 7 twice. There is no plural in metric units, so drop the [s] on [mls] to read [ml].

29. P 11, p 5, l 1. Delete [only] as it implies an unstated expectation.

30. P 11, p 7, l 1,2. Will all these measurements be done by the same clinicians?


A random a sample of 10 R(eference)s was checked for accuracy. This reviewer also likes to have issue numbers on Rs as it makes it easier to find the paper.

32. P 12, R 3. There are many more authors. Trials likes to publish all authors.

33. P 12, R 5. Insert [(3)] after [10].

34. P 12, R 7. There are 6 more authors and on l 3, insert [(4)] after [196].

35. P 12, R 10, 12, 13, 16, appear to be accurate.

36. P 12, R 11. The last author is [Chastang] and on l 2 insert [(8)] after [9].

37. R 17, l 3. Insert [(12)] after [100].

38. P 13, R 20, 21, 22 appear to be accurate.

39. P 15, Make the numbers on the y axis rotate clockwise 90 degrees to make the labels easier to read.