Reviewer’s report

Title: Auricular acupuncture for prehypertension and stage 1 hypertension: study protocol for a pilot multicentre randomised controlled trial

Version: 3 Date: 17 July 2013

Reviewer: Charlie Goldsmith

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Some criteria for pilot success should be specified as suggested by Reference 20.

1. Page 5, paragraph 2. Include the stratification here as well as on P 6.
3. P 6, p 3, l 6 suggests that the sample size of 60 will have to be accommodated in 16 strata: Centre(2), Age(4) and Sex (2). This may mean that some strata may have very few patients in which to accommodate blocking as suggested on l 4.
4. P 9, p 1, l 2. Rewrite as [... in at least 1-min ...].
5. P 9, p 2, l 5. Replace [has] by [have].
6. P 10, p 2. Provide Rs for the different types of analyses being proposed.
7. P 10, p 3, l 6 to 8. How will this be done? Provide a R.
8. P 13, p 1, l 1. Include the number of patients randomised as of resubmission.
9. P 14, l 3. BMI is defined twice; OTC, HDL, and LDL are not defined.