Reviewer's report

**Title:** Efficacy and safety of Acupuncture for chronic dizziness: a randomized, controlled clinical trial

**Version:** 2 **Date:** 21 September 2013

**Reviewer:** Fan-Rong Liang

**Reviewer's report:**

The study protocol 'Efficacy and safety of Acupuncture for chronic dizziness: a randomized, controlled clinical trial' submitted by Z. Xue focused on the RCT evaluating acupuncture's effect on dizziness. It is a well-drafted manuscript, the logic is clear, the trial design is sound and reasonable. However, there are certain issues for the authors to concern to make the protocol suitable for further publication.

**Major Issues:**

1. **population**
   as to this part, I think the author should state in their manuscript about how the participant was enrolled, namely the procedure of propagation by advertisement, introduction of all interests and benefits as well as risks along with this trial, signing a written consent form, etc. These are essential to assure the common rights for participant, which therefore must be supplemented lately.

2. **Exclusion criteria**
   how about excluding 'patient receiving or received acupuncture treatment in past 3 month'?

3. **Interventions**
   what kind of needle will be used? which brand? how long, the size and type, etc. It should be fully elaborated in the manuscript.Secondly, Is there manipulation of needles inserted? The manuscript should introduce all procedures clearly and adequately no matter what approach the manipulation modality is, namely manual, or electrical, as this is a protocol article.

4. **Randomization and blinding**
   '..., another research coordinator who is uninvolved with data collection randomly assigns them to one of two treatment groups by using a computer-generated, blocked random-allocation sequence.'
   the description of randomization is far more insufficient. I am assuming that the 2nd researcher coordinator or data collector will take part in the process of randomization, and moreover he/she just assign the included participant according to a random-allocation sequence, so is there any measures to guarantee allocation concealment? If there is, will it be done by a opaque
envelope, or somewhat. It should be stated.

5. Randomization and blinding
'The patients, data collection staff, and data analysts are blinded during the study period.'

according to last paragraph, it stated that 'evaluation, another research coordinator who is uninvolved with data collection randomly assigns them to one of two treatment groups...'; there will be a researcher getting involved in both data collection and randomization procedure. Thus, it is quite a paradox here. The author should regroup it.

Minor Issues:
1. Abstract-background
'Nontraditional remedies'
Usually, the 'acupuncture' therapy is called a manner of traditional Chinese medicine, the diction 'nontraditional' seems quite inappropriate here. I would like to suggest the authors replace this word by 'non-conventional' to make it reasonable. This comment is still suitable to the rest part of the manuscript.

2. Abstract-Methods
'one of two treatment groups receiving acupuncture treatment for 4 weeks.'

in order to avoid misunderstanding, I would prefer to modifying the sentence 'two treatment groups receiving acupuncture treatment....4 weeks' to 'two treatment groups receiving verum and sham acupuncture treatment respectively, for 4 weeks'.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.