Reviewer's report

Title: Corticosteroid Treatment for Community-acquired Pneumonia: A Randomized, Double-blind Study - the STEP Trial

Version: 2 Date: 26 April 2014

Reviewer: Jorge Salluh

Reviewer's report:

The authors have done a great job by designing and submitting to publication the carefully crafted protocol. I do have some comments and hope they help improve the manuscript

Major revisions:

1- Is the study adequately powered for harm? how was this calculated (if so)?

2- In the study by Meijvis et al (Lancet 2011) a statistically significant reduction in time to clinical stability was observed as reflected by a reduction of 1 day in length of stay. However is this clinically significant? (especially in the face of potential harm to some patients as observed by longer ICU LOS in the dexamethasone group in the same study, as well as higher rates of hyperglycemia, and also other - though not statistically significant, albeit underpowered- endpoints as empyema).

please comment how you will overcome this limitations in the STEP trial

Minor issues

1- please provide the number of IRB approval

2- The study is almost finished...so how could potential suggested changes in the revision modify it?

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests