Reviewer's report

Title: Effectiveness of strengthened stimulation during acupuncture for the treatment of allergic rhinitis study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

Version: 3
Date: 18 February 2014

Reviewer: Charlie Goldsmith

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Here are some suggestions to improve the writing of the protocol as well clarify the methods of the study. The pages were numbered from 1 to 22.

1. P(age) 1, p(aragraph) 2, l(ine) 2. Define [PER] and [IAR] here as well as P 16.
2. P 3, p 1, l 8. Replace [significantly] by [dramatically] or some or similar word.
4. P 3, p 1, l 15. Insert [incur additional] between [and] and [healthcare].
5. P 4, p 1, 5 and 6. Replace [trails] by [trials].
6. P 4, p 1, l 6. Replace [fail to] by [do not].
7. P 4, p 1, l 7. Insert [and] between [acupuncture] and [didn’t].
8. P 4, p 1, l 14. Replace [significance] by [importance] or some similar word.
9. P 4, p 1, l 17 and 21. Which is correct: [qizhi] or [qiz hi]? 
10. P 4, p 1, l 22. Insert [theory] between [the] and [of].
11. P 5, p 1, l 4. Replace [Bell] by [Bell’s] and either add additional items or delete [etc.].
13. P 6, p 1, l 1. Add an [s] to read [twelve-weeks].
15. P 6, p 2, l 8. Replace [had] by [will have].
16. P 6, p 3, l 5. Rewrite as […] they will be asked not to communicate …].
17. P 7, p 1, l 1. Add [ed] to read [linked].
18. P 7, p 2, l(tem) 2, l 3. Rewrite as [> 1 h], a space between each one.
19. P 7, p 2, l 5. Insert [current] between [No] and [participation].
20. P 8, p 1, l 6, l 2. Add a [.] to read [lactating.].
21. P 8, P 2, l 2, l 2. Replace [varies] by [various].
22. P 8, p 2, l 3. Add a [.] to read [follow-up.]. Also See Little RJ et al in NEJM 2012 Oct 4 as to how to avoid missing data in clinical trials.
23. P 9, p 2, l 6. Replace [were] by [will be].
24. P 9, p 2, l 12. Replace [were] by [are].
25. P 9, p 3, l 2. Rewrite as [10-30 mm]; insert a space.
26. P 10, p 1, l 2 and 5. Replace [were] by [will be].
27. P 10, p 1, l 7. Replace [opposite] by [other].
28. P 10, p 2, l 3 and 10. Provide R(eference)s to these points.
29. P 10, p 2, l 7 and 8. Since [or] logically includes [and], delete [and/].
30. P 11, p 1, l 3 and 4. Explain how this happens.
31. P 11, p 2, l 2. Rewrite as [The trial …].
32. P 11, p 2, l 3 and 4. Rewrite as [Written informed consent will be requested for all participants …].
33. P 12, p 2, heading. Rewrite as [Primary Outcomes].
34. P 12, p 4. Provide more detail about RQLQ, as to number of questions, scoring and how the questions are answered. Is there a Chinese validation for this questionnaire? Cite it.
35. P 13, p 2 heading. Rewrite as [Secondary Outcomes].
36. P 13, p 3, l 1. Rewrite as [To test …] since [In order] is redundant in English.
38. P 14, p 1, l 5. Were drop outs accommodated in the sample size justification?
41. P 15, p 1, l 1, 3, 5, Replace [population] by [group].
42. P 15, p 1, l 5. Either define [PP] or provide a R. Add [PP] and [ITT] to P 16.
43. P 15, p 1, l 6 and 7. How will the comparison be made?
44. P 15, p 2, l 5. Replace [trail] by [trial].
45. P 16, p 1, l 5. Rewrite as [To ensure …].
46. P 16, p 5, l 1 and 2. Insert a space after the numbers 1 and 2.
47. P 17, R 10. Delete [-] in [Gunnarsson].
49. P 18, R 16. Provide the first 30 authors before using [et al], just like R 2.
50. P 21, column 2, make the word [baseline] be on a single line and in column 3, rewrite as [12 sessions].
51. P 22, Appendices 3 and 4. Some parts look strange with inverted questions marks.