Reviewer's report

Title: Anthropometric, Biochemical and Clinical Assessment of Malnutrition among Egyptian Children with Chronic Liver Diseases: A Single Institutional Cross-sectional Study

Version: 0 Date: 19 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Alfredo Larrosa-Haro

Reviewer's report:

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-This work proposes to evaluate the nutritional status of children with CLD and make anthropometric associations and with some biochemical indicators; the number of cases studied is one of the relevant aspects. Regarding the design, an analytical cross-sectional study is proposed and a control group is included, which does not seem correct since the group with CLD seemed to correspond to its universe and the control group is selected. The evaluation of the nutritional status with z-score was already made against a parameter, so the use of a control group is debatable. The z values of the control group are on the positive side of the distribution curve and in almost all cases when observing the SD they exceed + 2SD which makes it questionable if it can be considered as a nutritionally "healthy" group. Another aspect related to the control group are ethical aspects in particular with blood samples which would at least require a particular mention.

-There is no justification for the evaluation of 2 biomarkers and it seems that the authors taken them because they had availability more than for being part of the research question.

-A table of correlation of anthropometric indices with a number of significant correlations is presented. It is not clear what is the reason for including this large number of anthropometric indicators, which makes it difficult to explain what these significant relationships mean and makes this large amount of data on one hand difficult to interpret and on the other does not establish which of them responds to the objective raised. It is a known fact that when studying sample of healthy or malnourished pediatric subjects these significant correlations are observed in what it has been called "anthropometric harmony".

-It is known that the presence of edema associated with hypoalbuminemia - which frequently occurs in this type of patients- introduces an important bias in the interpretation of indicators that include weight as a variable as it suebestimates deficit. The authors do not report the presence of edema or the albumin values; only correlation coefficients and value of p are presented. Albumin is a difficult marker to interpret since on the one hand it can express liver failure in the synthesis of proteins and on the other hand malnutrition.
In summary, this is a valuable series due to the number of patients and the large amount of related data that, although it is proposed as an analytical study, does not propose a hypothesis and stays in the descriptive field despite carrying out statistical tests of the relational level.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
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Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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No

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