Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of malnutrition among HIV-infected children in Central and West-African HIV-care programmes supported by the Growing Up Programme in 2011: a cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 29 July 2014

Reviewer: Bamenla Q Goka

Reviewer's report:

1. The researchers set out to determine the prevalence and associated risk factors for malnutrition among children in HIV-care programmes in West and Central Africa, which share a common source of funding. This is well articulated. The research addresses an important aspect of the care of HIV infected children which is unfortunately often handled sub-optimally.

2. The methodology was appropriate and well described.

Major Issue

3. It is of concern that the study protocol was not submitted to an Ethical Review Board (ERB). Authors should justify why they failed to do so.

Minor essential revisions (not for publication)

4. Abstract Background, 1st sentence- Replace “while” with “even though”
5. Introduction, line 4- “…CD4 T-cell concentration is decreased.”
6. Study population, 1st and 2nd paragraphs” … a nutritional support” delete ‘a’
7. Study population 2nd paragraph…”Everywhere, the nutritional support was privileged in children less than two years of age, mainly during their weaning period”- the meaning is not clear and so needs to be rephrased.
8. Study population 2nd paragraph, last sentence- replace “moment” with “time”
9. Study population 3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence-rephrase as “Data collected from each centre were entered into a global database…”
10. Results- section on Factors associated with acute malnutrition contains quite a number of typographical and grammatical errors e.g. some brackets are facing the wrong direction; phrases like “significantly twice lower” etc.
11. Results- section on Factors associated with mixed malnutrition, paragraphs 2 and 3-replace “since less” and “since more” with “for less” and “for more”.
12. Discussion paragraph 3, 1st sentence- it is incorrect to state that the study population could be considered as representing sub Saharan Africa because all the 12 programmes are from West and Central Africa.
13. Table 1 Heading number 6. Replace “on” with “in”.

Discretionary revisions
14. The title could be shortened by deleting “in 2011: a cross-sectional study”.

15. It would be informative if an association between the type and number of nutritional supports given, and the nutritional state of the child could be explored. This may help to give direction as to what would be the optimal nutritional support to use in HIV-care programmes.

**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