Author’s response to reviews

Title: Doxycycline for the treatment of nodding syndrome (DONS): a phase II, randomised placebo controlled trial. The study protocol

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Author’s response to reviews:

Response to Initial Review Comments

Dear Editor,
Re: "Doxycycline for the treatment of nodding syndrome: a phase II, randomised placebo controlled trial" (NURL-D-18-00268), to BMC Neurology.

We thank you for reviewing our manuscript and have gone ahead and revised it as suggested. Earlier, we also submitted in an email, copies of all approvals, the initial grant review, and MOUs. "Doxycycline for the treatment of nodding syndrome: a phase II, randomised placebo controlled trial" (NURL-D-18-00268), to BMC Neurology.

Ethical and Funding Approval Documentation

Before we can proceed with your submission, please forward copies of all ethical approval and funding approval for our assessment. These documents should be sent as email attachments to the following email address: BMCSeriesEditorial@biomedcentral.com

Please DO NOT upload these documents as additional files in the submission system.

For transparency purposes, an additional file listing all of the ethical committees that have approved this study, should accompany your submission.

We sent an email earlier to the said address that included copies of all:

1. Ethical approvals from SOMREC and OXTREC
2. Regulatory approvals from Uganda National Council of Science and Technology and from the National Drug therapy.
3. A memorandum of understanding with Kitgum General Hospital

Funding

Please confirm whether your study protocol has undergone peer-review by the funding body.
A study is considered to be externally funded if the authors have been awarded a grant for the study by a major funding body (e.g. governmental funding/award from a charitable foundation). If a study has not received external funding, then the study protocol will be sent for peer-review.

If a study has received funding/assistance from a commercial organization, this should be clearly stated in the 'competing interests' section of your manuscript. The role of the funding body in the design of the study and collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and in writing the manuscript should be declared.

The study received funding from MRC and DFID UK. The detailed review was also included in the documents sent by email.

Study Status

The protocol must be for a study that is ongoing. An ‘ongoing’ study is defined as one where the investigators are still collecting, or analyzing data. Can you please confirm the current stage of your research?

The study is ongoing. We have recruited all participants and are now conducting follow-up for outcome determination.

Related Articles

Please clarify whether any publications containing the results of this study have already been published or submitted to any journal? If so, can you please provide a list of the related articles?

No publication of the results of this study has been published. We are yet to determine the outcomes.
5. SPIRIT Checklist:

In accordance with BioMed Central editorial policies (http://www.biomedcentral.com/submissions/editorial-policies#standards+of+reporting), could you please ensure your manuscript reporting adheres to SPIRIT guidelines (http://www.spirit-statement.org/) for reporting clinical trial study protocols. This is so your methodology can be fully evaluated and utilised. Can you please include a completed SPIRIT checklist as an additional file when submitting your revised manuscript?

Please complete the checklist in full by inserting the page number/paragraph and section of your manuscript which reports the information that meets the criteria of the checklist. For example “Methods, paragraph 2”. If a criterion is not applicable for your particular manuscript/study, we can accept “N/A”.

Please note that checklists completed incorrectly will be returned for revision as we cannot progress your manuscript to peer review until the checklist has been completed.

This has been included.

6. Title Page

Please include the email addresses for all authors on the title page. The corresponding author should still be indicated.

All email addresses are now provided.

7. Figures:

a. Figures should be provided as separate files, and each figure of a manuscript should be submitted as a single file.

b. Figure files should contain only the image/graphic, as well as any associated keys/annotations.

c. Please provide figure titles/legends under a separate heading of 'Figure Legends' after the References.

These changes have been made.
8. Textual Overlap

We note that the current submission contains some textual overlap with other previously published works, in particular:


This overlap mainly exists in the Background and Discussion sections. While we understand that you may wish to express some of the same ideas contained in these publications, please be aware that we cannot condone the use of text from previously published work. Please re-phrase these sections to minimise overlap.

We have rephrased the two sections to minimize overlap.

Thank you

Dr Richard Idro