Reviewer’s report

Title: Fingolimod after a first unilateral episode of acute optic neuritis (MOVING) – Preliminary results from a randomized, rater-blind, active-controlled, phase 2 trial

Version: 0 Date: 03 Nov 2019

Reviewer: Hadas Kalish

Reviewer's report:

To the editor, The authors report the findings of an important study examining the possible remyelinating advantage of Fingolimod following optic neuritis. There is theoretical reason to expect a remyelinating advantage over IFN-β 1b, since Fingolimod binds to sphingosin-1 phosphate, blocking the exit of lymphocytes from the blood stream into the brain thus sequestering pathogenic T- and B-cells. However, Fingolimod is currently licensed for use in RRMS but not in ON as a CIS where remyelination may help improve visual outcome. Fingolimod is a first-line option in the US and other countries, but only licensed as second-line therapy in Europe. Second-line therapy is too late for optic nerve remyelination. Thus, I think this study of significant interest. Even though the numbers recruited were smaller than intended, I believe this paper should be published and serve as a platform for further study of this unique option to affect outcome not through preventing attacks. There is an important therapeutic gap with current disease-modifying therapies which do not exert direct neuroprotective effects nor enhance remyelination.

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

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I recommend additional statistical review
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

No competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal