Reviewer's report

Title: Maternal cortisol and stress are associated with birth outcomes, but are not affected by lipid-based nutrient supplements during pregnancy: an analysis of data from a randomized controlled trial in rural Malawi

Version: 1 Date: 14 August 2015

Reviewer: Michael Hambidge

Reviewer’s report:

No major revisions required.

Weakness recognized by authors is scattered timing of salivary sample collections.

Unless, as seems clear, the saliva cortisols are secondary outcomes of a primary LNS study, the specifics of the intervention groups seem puzzling. Two of the groups have multiple micronutrients and are mainly distinguished by the lipids and modest calories in the LNS. It would be helpful to those unfamiliar with LNS and its present research status [or / and to this reviewer if his assumption is wrong!] if the reason for selection of interventions was clarified at some point in the manuscript.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests.