Reviewer’s report

Title: Survival Status and Predictors of Mortality in Severely Malnourished Children Admitted to Jimma University Specialized Hospital from 2010-2012, Jimma, Ethiopia: A Retrospective Longitudinal Study

Version: 3  Date: 22 June 2014

Reviewer: Wieger Voskuijl

Reviewer’s report:

Re: ‘Survival Status and Predictors of Mortality in Severely Malnourished Children Admitted to Jimma University Specialized Hospital from 2010-2012, Jimma, Ethiopia: A Retrospective Longitudinal Study’

Habtemu Jarso Hebo Mr, Abdulhalik Workicho Bushra Mr and Fessahaye Alemseged Teklemichael Dr

BMC Pediatrics
Research article

Blantyre, June 20st

Dear Authors and Editor,

Thanks for allowing me to review the above paper. I have read it with interest but find below my comments and suggestions. I think the paper in its current version is not ready to be published. Since the paper is interesting for a larger audience I think it is indeed worthwhile publishing but it needs some major changes. My main comments are that the introduction is much too long and could at least be halved and the result section should be separate from the discussion (not together). This will be quite some work because at the moment these 2 sections are completely merged and combined.

Looking forward to a revised version.

Kind regards,

Dr Wieger Voskuijl, paediatrician at the College of Medicine in Blantyre, Malawi and head of Moyo NRU, Blantyre.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Background:
Overall the introduction is too long and it takes too many words to come to the aim of the presented paper. Merge 1st and 3rd paragraph and shorten the introduction overall.

Methods:
Is this a combined retro- (2013 data) and prospective trial (2012 data)? Where is it described and what made you choose this combination? As it currently stands this is not clear. Please clarify.

How was SAM defined and what defined criteria for admission to the NRU? This is really important to clarify since it might bias outcome.

Line 134: SAM with or without medical complication/danger signs admitted?

Line 144: Why did you exclude ‘unknown’ outcome or, why is the outcome unknown? Are these abscondees?

L 154: Data collection instrument; what instrument is this and how has this instrument been pre-specified/modified?

L162: what is the difference between patient card and file?

What happened with files with missing data?

Clinical profile:
L225: What do you define as a ‘deranged pulse rate’?

L230: Can you explain how, if 66% of the pts has diarrhea ‘most of them are not in a critical condition’?

Treatment outcomes:
L252: How did you define this? This belongs in the methods section.

Page 13: Was diarhoea not related to increased mortality? This is completely different than from other centres in SSA. Please elaborate on this finding please.

Page 13: Can you please sub-specify “co-morbidity”?

L387: please comment WHAT co-morbidities you found.

L401-2: be more specific here or rephrase; I do not understand this line.