Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of play-based family-centered psychomotor/psychosocial stimulation on the development of severely acutely malnourished children under six in a low-income setting: a randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 01 Jul 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 3

Reviewer's report:

"REVISION ASSESSMENT FROM THE ACADEMIC PEER REVIEWER:

Has the author addressed the previous reviewer's concerns sufficiently for you to recommend the revised work as a technically sound contribution? Yes

Reviewer comments: The authors have responded to a very large number of critiques and made a great deal of changes. However, the original reviewer's overall critique about lack of clarity is still a concern.
The manuscript is very long and does not clearly and in a logical fashion explain the intervention and results. Authors acknowledge they were not adequately powered, but nonetheless performed a large number of statistical analyses, further reducing power. Nonetheless, this study describes an important topic, an intervention for severely malnourished children, and the manuscript should be considered within the context of the challenges of providing and reporting on such an intervention in a low income setting in Ethiopia. Authors should not be worried about acknowledging the limitations of the study, as this will allow for future studies to improve in design.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:
The authors provided rebuttals to several of the original reviewers suggestions, but I do feel it would be helpful to address them as recommended. Specifically:
- The authors should move the information from p6 about statistical power from the methods to the discussion ("However, the statistical power computed from the cross-sectional data is insufficient..."). This information is not appropriate for the methods section.
- I appreciate the authors wish to keep the manuscript brief, but it would be helpful to briefly state the 3 phases of treatment (p5 "There are three phases of treatment of the SAM children..." and p7 "The intervention was offered in two phases: in-patient and out-patient") and clarify that there are indeed 3 phases.
- The statement hypothesizing the reasons for high participant attrition should be moved from the results to the discussion (p16 "The high loss in the control group could be attributed to the lack of frequent contact and support")."
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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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