Reviewer's report

Title: RESEARCH PROTOCOL: CISPLATIN-ASSOCIATED OTOTOXICITY AMONGST PATIENTS RECEIVING CANCER CHEMOTHERAPY AND THE FEASIBILITY OF AN AUDIOLOGICAL MONITORING PROGRAM

Version: 1 Date: 21 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Samson Jamesdaniel

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript entitled "Research Protocol: Cisplatin-Associated Ototoxicity Amongst Patients Receiving Cancer Chemotherapy And The Feasibility Of An Audiological Monitoring Program" aims to determine the incidence of cisplatin-induced ototoxicity in cervical cancer patients in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and explores the feasibility of a monitoring program.

This is an important topic of high clinical significance as the ototoxic side effect of cisplatin could compromise the quality of life of those treated with this widely-used highly effective anticancer drug. Though the proposed study is well designed there are certain concerns that need to be addressed.

First, the inclusion criteria suggests that adults i.e. ≥18 years of age will be included in this study. However, no upper age limit is set for recruiting participants. Because age is an important risk factor for hearing loss it would be difficult to disentangle the contribution of age to hearing loss in older patients treated with cisplatin. The authors need to discuss how they intend to resolve this issue or if they would specify an upper age limit, which will exclude patients with risk of age-related hearing loss.

Second, the authors plan to do follow-up audiometric testing at 1, 3, and 6 months after the completion of cisplatin treatment cycle. If continued progression of hearing loss is suspected even after the 3 month period, the testing could be done at 6 months instead of 3 months. If not, the testing at 6 months could be excluded. Because the cost of audiometric testing would be an important factor in determining the feasibility of the monitoring program the authors need to clarify the reasons for proposing audiometric testing at both 3 months and 6 months.

Third, the interview questionnaire for patients needs to be modified to gather information about concurrent use of antioxidants or dietary supplements, recent use of aminoglycoside antibiotics, and occupational or recreational exposure to other risk factors such as heavy metals and solvents because these exposures can interfere with the hearing loss induced by cisplatin.
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?
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Yes

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Not relevant to this manuscript

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