Reviewers report

Title: Stakeholder views on the acceptability of Human Infection Studies in Malawi

Version: 0 Date: 20 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Primus Che Chi

Reviewer's report:

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This is an important paper that explores the acceptability and ethics of human infection study in the context of Malawi. The main challenge I find with the design and timing of the study is whether it is undertaken to support a decision that has already been made (to conduct a pneumococcal human infection study in Malawi) or to truly assess the acceptability of a POTENTIAL pneumococcal human infection study in Malawi. This is because it appears the decision to implement the study in Malawi has already been made and this acceptability study will be 'used' to validate the plans of the clinical study team rather than the other way round. For example, if the study found that HIS was not acceptable by some important stakeholders, will the study still proceed? These are issues that should be diligently addressed in the discussion of the study. This is because, arguably a case can be made that there is little value for an acceptability study when the decision to undertake the study has already been made. It is therefore unclear the extent to which the findings of the study will contribute in the design and implementation of the main clinical study.

Many of the quotes can be reduced (especially quotes with the same messages). Some of the messages can be captured in the text and the quotes deleted.

It will be important to further discuss the fairness of the proposed participant recruitment method of a flyer in the Malawian context as it may be perceived as unfair.
There are a number of semantic issues that need to be addressed in the paper. It is therefore important to review the English. I have attached the manuscript with some highlights and comments.

**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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