Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Mesalazine in the initial management of severely malnourished children with environmental enteric dysfunction: a pilot randomised controlled trial

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 10 June 2014

**Reviewer:** Mark Manary

**Reviewer’s report:**
A novel approach to a huge problem, which deserves to be published.

**Major Compulsory Revisions**
none

**Minor Essential Revisions**
1. The term malnutrition is used in the manuscript, and I think it is not meaningful. I would suggest using the terms SAM, MAM and stunting. Additionally growth faltering can be used to describe reduced rate of linear growth.

2. tuberculosis does not need to be capitalized and should be spelled out in the text.

3. Is treatment with mesalazine contraindicated in any common infections with SAM, such as tuberculosis or gram negative sepsis, if so make that clear.

4. A limitation of the trial is that damage to the gut mucosa in kwashiorkor, the condition of most of the subjects, might well be different than environmental enteropathy associated with stunting. During the vulnerable period with SAM it might be better to have a gut with the maximum capacity to mount an inflammatory response, while in a state of chronic malnutrition it might be better to reduce the inflammatory response. This should be noted in the discussion, the trial is not generalizable to less severe populations.

**Discretionary Revisions**

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests