Reviewer’s report

Title: The effect of protein supplementation on body muscle mass and fat mass in post-bariatric surgery: A randomized controlled trial (RCT) study protocol

Version: 0 Date: 08 Aug 2017

Reviewer: Fanny Buckinx

Reviewer's report:

General comments:

This is a protocol of a randomized controlled study aimed to assess the effect of protein supplementation on body muscle mass and fat mass in Qataris post-bariatric surgery. I think there was a need for such study but better justification is needed.

The protocol is generally well-written and the analyzes envisaged appear to be coherent. I have, however, some concerns and suggestions for improvement.

Specific comments:

Introduction:

- Please, replace « see figure 1 for obesity classification » by « see table 1 for obesity classification ».

- The authors wrote: « this has been chiefly achieved via dietary and lifestyle modification as well as surgical approaches ».

- I think, you should mention that surgery can be performed if lifestyle changes (diet and physical activity) have not been successful and only among morbidly obese people.

- The authors wrote: » Protein supplementation is an effective approach to ensuring that post-bariatric surgery patients maintain muscle mass and healthy levels of the above-mentioned nutrients and body compositions ». This seems already proven, nevertheless it is the aim of your study. What will your study do in addition to the data already published?

- In your table 1, the title of the column "principal cut-off points" must be shifted in the next column
Research question

- Please also indicate your hypothesis.
- What are the changes in vit B12, Mg and Zn. Specify that there are blood levels.
- Maybe it would be interesting to compare the results between sleeve and bypass?

Methods:

- Recruitment will start in April 2017. How much time is planned for recruitment
- A time line/planning of the study should be provided (i.e. Pert diagram)
- Be more consistent in the conjugation throughout the manuscript (i.e. "will be" or "was done")
- Please justify the duration of the study.

The energy difference between the product and the placebo (150kcal/bottle) is important and this difference could have an impact on body composition.

- The sentence « For the blinding, a dietician will assign the treatment and the control to patients as per the above randomization results can be moved in the first paragraph (when you explain the randomization process ».

Participants:

- I suppose that patients must be volunteer to participate in this study. Do you have an informed consent of each participant prior the study?
- Are you sure of the representativeness of your sample? Provide more information.
- In your inclusion criteria, please add that patients must be volunteer, if it is true.
- Please define HMC, the first time you use it.
- Regarding the third exclusion criterion: Who (and how) do you check that people are taking 80% of supplements?
Materials:
- Because the protein supplement is a standard practice, what is the particularity of your study?

Measurements:
- Please provide the complete reference for « Tanita's body composition analyzer ».
- Could you please provide more details regarding the inter- and intra-reliability?

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:
An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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