Author’s response to reviews

Title: Zinc as an adjunct treatment for reducing case fatality due to clinical severe infection in young infants: study protocol for a randomized controlled trial

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1) page 8 line 54 Want to double check that -4.5z is not a typo.

Response: This is not a typo. Only the very severely growth retarded will be excluded. This is also in line with the protocols submitted to our IRBs.

2) page 12 line 29 “day wise” appears to be a typo.

Response: Thanks for pointing this out, the wording is not good and we have changed the sentence which now reads: “The caregiver will be equipped with a small durable booklet to record every successful administration as well as any failed attempts to administer the suspension.”

3) Page 13 line 48 “one and a half month” should be months

Response: Thanks, changed in this version.

4) Page 15 Please provide further details on blood collection and blood processing. From where on the infant are you collecting the blood. Please provide the centrifuge details (e.g. time, speed and temperature).

Response: We have added the following text to the methods section “The blood will be centrifuged at approximately 700g for 10 minutes at room temperature”

5) Page 15 page line 61 please indicate where you will be getting the ELISA kit

Response: The following information has been added: Serum CRP concentration will be measured using a commercial ELISA kit (Biocheck, Foster City, CA, USA) at the micronutrient lab at THSTI.

6) In laboratory procedures you indicate that blood is being used for a methylation study and transcriptional study. Please include the measures you will be looking at in the Secondary outcomes.
Response: We have not yet received adequate funding for these additional studies and it is still unclear whether they will be undertaken. We have removed this secondary outcome from the protocol.

7) Please specify what immunobiological studies you will be performing and include those outcomes in the Secondary outcomes?

Response: These secondary outcomes are also still under consideration so we will have chosen not to mention them, i.e. removed them, in this protocol manuscript.

8) Please make sure the headings under the Declarations section are in the correct order

Response: Thanks, we have updated the Declarations section and believe that it is ok now.