Reviewer’s report

Title: Small volume plasma exchange for Guillain-Barré syndrome in resource poor settings: a safety and feasibility study

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Reviewer: Gareth Parry

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This manuscript describes an important study of small volume plasma exchange for the treatment of GBS in a resource-constrained environment to determine whether it is safe and whether it is feasible to remove the proposed volume of plasma in this patient cohort. The study is already underway, having been started in March 2016. The rationale, methods and proposed feasibility outcomes are clearly described and are appropriate. I have some concerns about the safety assessments:

1. Will all GBS patients be enrolled, regardless of presence or severity of autonomic instability such as hypotension or cardiac arrhythmias. If so, what measures will be taken to ensure that they do not suffer harm?

2. It is stated that "the study will be considered safe" if patients do not develop sepsis or venous thrombosis. Exacerbation of autonomic instability is a secondary outcome measure but may severely impact safety of the procedure. How will the incidence and severity of exacerbation of autonomic instability be factored into the overall assessment of safety of the procedure?

3. It is not clearly indicated exactly how autonomic function will be assessed during the process of removal of blood, simply a comment that it will be recorded daily. Will there be continuous monitoring of BP and cardiac rhythm? If not, how frequently will these measures be recorded during and immediately following the blood removal?

4. It is stated that Hb will be measured at baseline. Will patients be excluded if there is pre-existing anemia? What is considered an acceptable Hb concentration?

5. Patients will leukocytosis at baseline may have covert pre-existing infection. This may increase the likelihood of developing CVC-related infection and also exacerbation of autonomic instability. Will patients with baseline leukocytosis be excluded or investigated for covert infection?

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I have received an honorarium and a research grant funding from Terumo BCT, a manufacturer of therapeutic plasma exchange instruments.

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