Reviewer’s report

A Feasibility Randomised Controlled Trial of Short-Term Fasting Prior to CAPOX chemotherapy for Stage 2/3 Colorectal Cancer: SWiFT Protocol

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Reviewer: Yazhou He

Reviewer's report:

Shingler and colleagues designed this feasibility trial to investigate 36-hour fasting as an intervention to assist mitigate adverse effects of CAPOX chemotherapy for stage II/III colorectal cancer patients. Overall, this is a trial which could potentially add important prior knowledge to future large trials. I have a few comments which I am expecting to be addressed by the authors.

Major comments:

1). The authors may consider explaining more on the adoption of 36-hour plan instead of other plans like 24, 48 plans. In the study by Dorff et al. [1], the investigators reported both significant and non-significant trend favouring plans of longer span (>48 hours) in terms of DNA damage and neutropenia. Although the authors stated that longer hours may lead to poor adherence, is there any evidence supporting a significant difference of adherence between 36- and 48-hour plans? If this time span of 36 was selected arbitrarily, and there has not been much evidence, this ought to be discussed a bit more in the discussion section on how the benefit and adherence is balanced.

2). This is more of question than comment. The primary aim for this study is to evaluate the feasibility instead of the effect of fasting on chemotherapy-related side effects. In this context, do we really need a blank control arm (standard diet arm in this study) if it is very underpowered to detect any treatment effects? It is mentioned in the text that this can better inform the sample size calculation for future trials although underpowered. However, the incidence rates or other metrics on the adverse effect for stage II/III patients with normal diet can be readily found in other large trials. Then why not just a single-arm design which would generate larger sample size to estimate the adverse events rate more accurately for the fasting arm?

Minor comments:

1). Line 62-63: A reference needs to be inserted here to support the narrative.

2). Table 1: what is the difference between C1 D-1 and C1 D1?

Ref:

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