Reviewer’s report

Title: Tolerability of NGX-4010, a capsaicin 8% dermal patch, following pretreatment with lidocaine 2.5%/prilocaine 2.5% cream in patients with post-herpetic neuralgia

Version: 1 Date: 5 March 2011

Reviewer: Robert Johnson

Reviewer’s report:

1. What is the purpose of this study? It does not compare treatments other than by historical control data and numbers are small. Is the eutectic mixture more readily available, easier to use or less expensive than the currently used lidocaine? MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISION

2. As a descriptive piece of work confirming the effects, other than relief of PHN, of 8% capsaicin after topical local anaesthesia, it is useful.

3. The description of PHN is inadequate. It should include both continuous and paroxysmal spontaneous elements of pain as well as allodynia. MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISION

4. The statement regarding efficacy of 8% capsaicin in the Conclusions section should be modified to remove ‘… NGX-4010 is a treatment option for PHN that provides significant pain relief …’ and replace with ‘… may provide …’, or alternatively state figures for percentage gaining pain relief and its magnitude and duration. MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISION

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

No direct competing interests but I have received consulting and lecture fees from Merck and Sanofi Pasteur MSD in relation to herpes zoster vaccine.