Reviewer's report

Title: Antidepressant treatment and cultural differences - a survey of the attitudes of physicians and patients in Sweden and Turkey

Version: 1 Date: 10 July 2010

Reviewer: Harvey Whiteford

Reviewer's report:

The authors aim to compare the outcomes for patients prescribed anti-depressant medication for eight weeks in Sweden and Turkey. They also want to examine the impact of culture on depression treatment and outcomes.

Major Revisions

The information on recruitment contained in the Results section needs to be moved to Methods. The main issue with this paper is the sampling given the data is drawn from a large number of non-controlled individual physician practices. The samples for each country are pooled and compared assuming a degree of homogeneity within each country.

1. The authors state that a total of 460 patients were recruited, 107 in Sweden and 353 in Turkey. Were these consecutive patients? If not, how will this affect the analysis and findings?

2. I expect the physicians were not calibrated to apply the physician rating tools and this introduces bias which needs to be commented on.

3. On page 10 the authors state that the proportion of patients returning for their 8 week visit was 92.9% in Turkey and 76.6% in Sweden. Is there any more information on those who dropped out of the study? If so does this introduce bias. If not comment in the Limitations section that no information is available but losing nearly a quarter of the sample in Turkey could bias the results.

4. In the Analysis section the authors controlled for age and sex. Given they were interested in outcomes which may be related to the efficacy of treatment is there any information which could be controlled for in the analyses related to:
   a) doses of anti-depressant medication used?
   b) adjunctive psychological therapies used?
   between the different physicians or the two countries.

5. To what extent do the authors believe the primary care physicians were different in their use of diagnostic and treatment protocols and how would this impact on their conclusions.

6. The limitations needs to be brought together in a Limitations section which should be a clear heading in the paper.
Minor revisions

1. There are no measures of culture in the quantitative analysis so it is assumed that the countries from where the samples are drawn is sufficient to allow for cultural comparison. However it is not clear how the cultural implications are to be generalised beyond those two countries (Turkey and Sweden).

2. Some of the information in Table 1 could be discarded with relevant material mentioned in the text.

3. The n for each country in Table 3 needs to be adjusted to those who were still in the study at week 8.

**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:**

I declare that I have no competing interests