Reviewer's report

Title: An observational descriptive study of the epidemiology, treatment and trends in neuropathic pain in a UK general population

Version: 1 Date: 28 July 2012

Reviewer: Beverly Collett

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Minor essential revisions:

Abstract: Is it not that Recording of neuropathic back pain AND post-operative pain not OR was investigated?
Reference 8- incomplete

This is an interesting paper that investigates the General Practice Research Database to calculate incidence rates for common neuropathic pain conditions and what medications are used to treat these conditions.

Methodology appears to be sound from my reading of this paper as a practising clinician. I was interested in their discussion about neuropathic back pain as this is a contentious issue. However, this was well-argued and not over analysed. Likewise for post-operative neuropathic pain.

I was rather confused as to the inclusion of 'anaesthetic (oral or intravenous) but not dermal and then seeing anaesthetics included in Table 3.

I was surprised at the number of patients with neuropathic back pain identified - but thought that the discussion about the limitaitons of this study was reasonable.

I was unclear as to why Citalopram, Escitalopram, Paroxetine and Sertraline and Fluoxetine were included in treatment Tables for PDN & back pain. Could this be clarified?

Interesting data about prescribing for PHN, DPN and phantom pain.
Useful paper that will assist in better education on prescribing for General Practitioners.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

In the past 5 years, I have received consultancy fees, travel grants or lecturing fees from Pfizer, Mundipharma, NAPP, Grunenthal, Astellas, Lilly