Reviewer's report

Title: How does comorbidity affect cost of health care in patients with irritable bowel syndrome? A cohort study in general practice

Version: 1 Date: 30 November 2009

Reviewer: Pierre Pare

Reviewer's report:

This is a well conducted study with adequate analysis of the data recorded by appropriate measures.

1. No major or minor comments.
2. Discretionary revisions:
   a. Material and methods: Criteria for inclusion into the study deserve clarity. 208 Rome II defined patients confirmed by clinical diagnosis were invited to participate. It should be clear that the remaining of 733 assessed patients were or not IBS patients based on Rome II criteria. If so do the demographics of these patients differ from the study group and why were they not invited to participate?
   b. Discussion: Since a control group with non IBS related chronic health conditions was not assessed, the discussion should expand more, based on available literature, on comparison with such groups. Although it is clear that this cohort of general practice IBS patients drives more cost from comorbidity than from IBS itself, this may not be unique to this chronic condition since illness behaviour is also a feature of several health conditions.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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. In the past five years, I have received support and funding by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation for conducting IBS studies.