Reviewer’s report

Title: Development of a validated Patient Reported Symptom Metric for Pediatric Eosinophilic Esophagitis: Qualitative Methods

Version: 3 Date: 20 September 2011

Reviewer: Emuella Flood

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Major Compulsory Revisions

It is fair to say that a distinction between Flood et al and this study is that in this study a separate sample was used to perform concept elicitation and cognitive debriefing. However, the Flood et al symptom diary was developed with patient input and did involve assessing content validity. The interviews included both concept elicitation (performed first with open-ended questions) and cognitive debriefing, and the diary was revised substantially based on both the concept elicitation findings (e.g., adding symptoms mentioned by patients) and cognitive debriefing. As noted in the PRO Guidance, "developers can draft the domains and items to be measured based on literature and expert opinion. Subsequently, patient interviews, focus groups and qualitative cognitive interviewing ensures understanding and completeness of concepts..."

Therefore, text starting on lines 61, 94, 258 and 260 should be revised to reflect this.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to note the similarities between the two measures (there is quite a nice overlap in symptoms), as corroborating evidence suggesting that the item content of PEESS is relevant and comprehensive.

Finally, the issue around recall is not just one of responsiveness, but also children's ability to think back a month and recall the frequency and severity of their symptoms, as well as the need to then try to average their experiences over that period.

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.