Reviewer's report

Title: Interferon beta-1a for the maintenance of remission in patients with Crohn's disease: results of a phase II dose-finding study

Version: 1 Date: 6 August 2008

Reviewer: E Ebert

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Interferon beta 1a for the maintenance of remission in patients with Crohn’s disease: results of a phase 2 dose-finding study

The authors claim that interferon beta is no different in efficacy than placebo in patients with Crohn’s disease.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. Two major problems with the study are the small numbers of patients and the large drop-out due to treatment failures. Surprisingly, these problems are not mentioned in the Abstract or Discussion. There is no information regarding the treatment failures.

2. Interferon may in fact worsen the disease process as suggested by the increased ESR and C-reactive protein compared to placebo. (Is this difference significant?) In addition, the only significant finding was a worsening of disease with interferon at week 52. Furthermore, the placebo group had a smaller mean increase in CDAI score than the interferon group (Is this difference significant? The changes in the CDAI score should be included.) The fact that interferon may worsen the disease should be addressed in the Abstract and Discussion.

Minor essential revisions:

The significantly different values are from week 52. This should be stated in the legend.

The abstract should indicate that the protocol was a steroid taper.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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