Reviewer's report

Title: Rational Choice of Cholinesterase Inhibitor for the Treatment of Alzheimer's Disease in Canada: A Comparative Economic Analysis

Version: 4 Date: 12 November 2003

Reviewer: Lieven Annemans

Reviewer's report:

General
Interesting and well written paper. Here and there some need for better transparency. One major problem: table 3 seems to be lacking which makes review of the results section difficult.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
Methods - ahead model. Needs a little bit more transparency: is it a Markov model? what is the relation between ADAScog and FTE? (perhaps provide equation)
It is explained that this model also predicts survival based on cognitive symptoms. Later is is explained that this effect on survival is not taken into account. How is then the effect of a drug on cognitive symptoms applied in this model to enable an effect on FTE but not on survival.

Minor Compulsory Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Page 5: in the equation forecasting cognitive status after 6 months what are the confidence intervals surrounding the coefficients.
Page 5: is the fact that utility for FTE is equal regardless of the location of the patient based on an assumption? If so, this must be stated.
Page 6, on top: add decimals to the figures 21 and 36.
Page 6; Treatment efficacy: ITT analysis = true ITT or LOCF: needs to specify and explain implications of this.
Page 7: The likelihood of completing the first 6 montsh is based on an adjustment of the base withdrawal. Please provide an example.
page 8: the daily cost of cholinesterase was for all the same? Also regardless of the dose? Do they all apply flat pricing?
Page 8: discontinuation: explain what happens if a patient stops treatment after 6 months.
Page 9: variable effect: galantamine is $3 more expensive. What is the corresponding cost/QALY?
Page 10: Sensitivity on health utilities. What was the range?

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
NONE, expect TABLE 3 LACKING

What next?: Accept after minor compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

NONE