Reviewer's report

Title: Psychotropic drug use among nursing home residents in Austria: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 13 March 2009

Reviewer: Daniel Collerton

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to review this paper which I read with interest. It addresses an important question. I have structured my comments under the headings suggested by the editors.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Yes, though it is regrettable that data protection prevented cross referencing medication prescription with diagnosis. The description of cluster adjustment might be difficult for a non statistician to follow. I would suggest rewriting this section to make it more directly relevant to the study. For example, "Since data is collected across a number of homes, the fact that each resident of a home has common influences means that the data from each individual must be adjusted for these common factors in order to make a reliable estimate of effect size and precision. Cluster adjustment allows these common factors to be taken into account..."

3. Are the data sound?
   The study would have been strengthened by using two independent collectors and coders for a subsample of the data in order to check whether there were any errors in data collection, though this is unlikely to be a major or systematic bias. The study did well in gaining such a large sample of homes.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes. The study does not report fundamentally new results, but it extends a known finding to a new population.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes. The main limitation is that the inappropriateness of prescribing can only be inferred from its high levels. The authors acknowledge that checking prescriptions against diagnoses would have given a clear answer.
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

References are up to date and comprehensive. Generally, however, references are not repeated in the reference list with different numbers when they recur in the text, the same number is used both times and the reference listed only once.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

In general, yes. ACT could be spelled out, and the final conclusion could be strengthened by citing the rates of prescribing in other countries rather than just saying that they are higher in Austria

9. Is the writing acceptable?

The paper is clear. It would benefit from minor editing by a native English speaker in some places to increase its readability.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests