Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient-Reported Treatment Burden of Chronic Immune Thrombocytopenia Therapies

Version: 2 Date: 17 August 2011

Reviewer: Robert klaassen

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well done survey of 589 patients using appropriate methodology, which provides novel information, albeit within the limitations of an online survey.

Major compulsory revisions:
Comparing chronic therapy with steroids to acute therapy with IVIG and anti-D is inappropriate as they are very different. IVIG and anti-D are given over one or two days whereas steroids maybe given daily for weeks - months. Splenectomy is a more appropriate comparison to steroids as it would be considered “long-term” therapy. I am not ruling out the comparison but it needs to be clear that you are comparing apples and oranges. A comment about the significant burden/side effects of long term steroids would be appropriate (although I am not clear for the manuscript if you are able to distinguish whether patients received a short course of steroids (which could rightfully be compared to IVIG and anti-D) or chronic steroids). This needs to be clearly stated as a limitation of this study.

Clarity of the statistics: “aggregate bother” is used throughout the manuscript and is not a term that clinicians will be familiar with. Please make this concept clearer. Related to this table 2 and 3 will be uninterpretable for the average clinician – for instance why is an adjusted R2 of 0.17 in gender for steroids statistically significant? Explain Beta estimates – again a term most clinicians are not familiar with.

Minor essential revisions:
Introduction:
1. first paragraph – change “rate” to “prevalence”
2. second paragraph – delete “achieve and maintain a platelet count that” as this is controversial.
3. 3rd paragraph - I have never heard of IVIG being associated with epistaxis – please delete and back pain is not a common problem. please replace with more common side effects such as fever, rash or similar.
4. 4th paragraph – delete sentence “given that long-term …successfully: as this is controversial.

Results
There is duplication with table 1 – please delete any repetition – for instance
delete the gender row from the table.
The first sentence of “Impact of Effects” is not clear, please revise.

Tables
1. Under Dry bleeds “bruising” is misspelled.
2. Table 2 change title to Regression model predicting aggregate bother among patients with at least one side effect – taken form the text as this is clearer than the current title. Alter the text so that it is not identical to the table title.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'