Reviewer's report

Title: Corticosteroid and antiviral therapy for Bell palsy: A network meta-analyses

Version: 1 Date: 23 April 2010

Reviewer: M. Tariq Bhatti

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions: none

Minor essential revisions: none

Discretionary revisions:

There has been some suggestion in the literature that antiviral therapy in combination with corticosteroids may be beneficial in patients with severe Bell's palsy. Are the author’s able to analyze this subset of patients? For example, in the study by Hato et al (Hato N, Yamada H, Kohno H, et al. Valacyclovir and prednisolone treatment for Bell's palsy: a multicenter, randomized, placebo-controlled study. Otol Neurotol 2007;28:408-13.) at 6 months, 89.7% of patients in the prednisolone/placebo group achieved complete facial function recovery in comparison to 96.5% of those in the prednisolone/valacyclovir group. In comparison, in the study by Sullivan et al (Sullivan FM, Swan IR, Donnan PT, et al. Early treatment with prednisolone or acyclovir in Bell's palsy. N Engl J Med 2007;357:1598-607.), 94.4% of patients in the prednisolone alone group achieved complete facial recovery versus only 92.7% of patients in the acyclovir/prednisolone group. On average, the patients in the Hato et al study had more severe facial palsy than those patients in the Sullivan et al study, which some experts feel accounts for the difference in the effect of combination therapy on facial function recovery between the two studies.

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