Reviewer's report

Title: Usability of DBS therapy controllers in elderly patients

Version: 1 Date: 19 October 2011

Reviewer: Patricia Limousin

Reviewer's report:

This article assesses the ability of patients treated with DBS to use their personal programmer. More specifically the study compares a group of patients who was trained with video and a group who was not. This is an original study, since to my knowledge nobody has assessed this issue before.

I have only minor comments or suggestions

Minor essential revisions
- Since the age cut off is 55, calling the group “elderly DBS patients” is a little strong; they could be referred as over 55 DBS patients.
- The abstract states that patients had been using the controller for more than 6 years, but the method section is mentioning 6 months, there must be an error.
- The abstract could be slightly more clear in particular focusing on the method and aim of the study on the impact of the training with video.
- Method: it would be useful to clarify how patients were assigned to a particular group. I assume that the rater was not blinded of the group the patient was in, this should be mentioned in the method and possibly added to discussion, since a blinded assessor could be considered for future studies.
- It would be interesting to know what is the routine information given to the patient in relation to how to use the device as well was the advice given to the patient in relation to how often to use it and what to use it for.
- Result section, use of therapy controller: some of this section would fit better in the method.

Discretionary revisions
- Introduction: there could be indication that depression and OCD are not established indication but under investigation
- I am not sure table 3 is really necessary
- It would have been interesting to know if there a difference between PD and essential tremor patients, nevertheless I understand that the groups are probably too small for that.
- Result page 11 first sentence I would remove “obviously”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I have received reimbursements and fees for lecture from Medtronic and St Jude. I do not hold any stocks or shares, I am not applying for patent, I have not other financial or non-financial competing interest.