Reviewer's report

Title: The size of the treatment effect: do patients and proxies agree?

Version: 2 Date: 8 October 2008

Reviewer: Michael Hutchinson

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written report of a study of the concurrent use of a patient report measure, the MSIS-29, by both a patient with MS and their proxy respondent. A group of 42 patients who were treated with steroid therapy were asked to describe also whether they had improved of were unchanged. The authors demonstrate quite remarkable mean agreement between patients and partners in the change/nochange in the MSIS-29 recorded over a quite short time scale of 6-8 weeks. The ROC curves produce remarkably good sensitivity, specificity, NPV and PPV. The value of 7-8 change in the MSIS-29 physical as being the point at which change in the MSIS-29 is clinically significant is in keeping with a previous study. Whether such concurrence in the patient & partner assessments would hold up in the longer term (1 year plus) should be the subject of a further study.

ONLY CAVEAT. The abstract should contain actual results and numbers of patients studied

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests