Reviewer's report

Title: The cost of relapse, the predictors of relapse, and the role of prior relapse in the treatment of schizophrenia

Version: 1 Date: 27 September 2009

Reviewer: Alp Ucok

Reviewer's report:

The topic of the study is important and their findings support the importance of preventing relapses in schizophrenia. Strength of the study comes from large sample size and prospective nature. However, there are some issues need to be explained;

Minor essential revisions:

Major weakness of the design is the definition of relapse which is crucial for this study: There is no operational criteria used to define the relapse. It is not clear whether (if any) hospitalizations with social indications or suicide attempts which is not directly related to schizophrenia or comorbid major depression have taken into account. Additionally, by definition, retrospective nature of a part of the data collecting process leads some credibility issues. The authors should explain these issues or mention them among the limitations of the study

There is no information about the number of visits during the follow-up. Monthly or only one visit at the end of one year? Please explain.

In discussion section, the authors address their findings of analysis about some excluded patients. This paragraph should be moved to the results section.

I confirm that I accept the open review policy of the Journal

Alp Ucok, MD
Professor of Psychiatry
Istanbul Turkey

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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 declare that I have no competing interests'