Reviewer's report

Title: Effectiveness of psychotherapeutic, pharmacological, and combined treatments for chronic depression: a systematic review (METACHRON)

Version: 1 Date: 12 September 2010

Reviewer: Toshiaki Furukawa

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MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS
1) The authors list many interventions and comparisons but have not been explicit which comparisons they are going to make. More specifically I wonder if the authors want to make very broad comparisons by pooling "psychotherapies" "pharmacotherapies" and "combined treatments", or if they intend to make more specific comparisons. Although likely to be very heterogeneous, I think the study hypotheses require that the authors make the 3 overall comparisons (psychotherapies vs pharmacotherapies, pharmacotherapies vs combinations etc) first, and if they do turn out to be heterogeneous then look for sources of heterogeneity.

2) The authors state that they intend to abide by the ITT principle. Very typically a study gives the number of patients (1) who drop out early and never return, (2) who drop out after one or two visits and whose scores are LOCFed, and (3) who complete the study. It will help both the authors and the readers if the authors can state how they intend to deal with all of these people.

MINOR ESSENTIAL COMMENTS
The English will benefit from some brush-up here and there.

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:

TAF has received speaking fees from Astellas, Dai-Nippon Sumitomo, Eli Lilly, GlaxoSmithKline, Janssen, Kyorin, Meiji, Otsuka, Pfizer, Schering-Plough, Shionogi and Yoshitomi. He is on research advisory board for Sekisui Chemicals and Takeda Science Foundation. He has received royalties from Igaku-Shoin, Seiwa-Shoten, Nihon Bunka Kagaku-sha and American Psychiatric Publication. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and the Japanese
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