Reviewer's report

Title: Collaborative Care for Patients with Bipolar Disorder: a randomised controlled trial.

Version: 1 Date: 23 June 2011

Reviewer: Gil L’italien

Reviewer's report:

Design is adequately presented. The postulated sample size seems small. I would challenge the authors to find some published studies to better inform the sample size. What about the Simon (ref 16,17) and Suppes (18) intervention studies referenced by the authors? Appropriate sizing is critical since authors admit that knowledge of CC by CAU patients/providers might reduce the effect size; this could lead to an uninterpretable or erroneous finding.

One major limitation to the study which should be acknowledged in the discussion is the fact that it will not be possible to discern which components of CC are contributing most (or least) to the benefit (if seen). This is unfortunate since the economic component of this analysis might benefit from an assessment of the more versus less cost intensive components of the intervention. Those components with the greatest benefit might justify a greater cost.

Also what is meant by: "These interventions will be tailored to the individual needs of the patient." For example, will some patients receive more intensive lifestyle coaching if they request it, or respond to it? Greater clarity is needed here.

This could contribute to overall effects which are related to the patient characteristics and thus may not be generalizable to other groups of patients with differing characteristics.

Every effort should be made to apply the intervention in a standardized manner.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

Employee and shareholder of Bristol Myers Squibb, a manufacturer of abilify, an antipsychotic agent used to treat bipolar disorder.