Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of the short-term responder rate of Electroconvulsive therapy in depressive disorders - a population based study.

Version: 2 Date: 10 July 2012

Reviewer: Dennis Hofman

Reviewer’s report:


The authors here present a large cohort study of ECT effectiveness in uni-and bipolar depressed patients, as well as schizoaffective patients. This is a timely topic, as outcomes of different treatments of depression differ greatly between patients, and factors predicting treatment outcome are hard to identify.

The manuscript has already been reviewed for BMC Psychiatry, and the authors have revised their manuscript to meet the initial reviewers’ comments. I therefore feel it is inappropriate to present them with a full new round of revision requirements. I do however have some suggestions that in my opinion could improve the interpretability of the data presented.

First, the hypothesis on the responder rate being lower in clinical routine than in controlled trials does not necessary follow from the introductory text. I would like to encourage the authors to elaborate on the present lack of empirical knowledge the present MS addresses, and possible predictors of remission after ECT that already have successfully been identified.

Second, in their methods section, the authors report the results of the regression analysis addressing the question of what factors would constitute successful predictors of treatment outcome, a significant question in the present paper. I feel the results would benefit from a more extensive discussion in the text, instead of referring to table 2.

Reviewer 2 has already assessed some fundamental shortcomings of the study, which are inevitable in a naturalistic cohort study, and are assessed in the revised MS, if possible.

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.