Author's response to reviews

Title: ErbB3 mRNA leukocyte levels as a biomarker for Major Depressive Disorder

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof. Deesha Majithia,

appended please you find the manuscript entitled “ErbB3 mRNA leukocyte levels as a biomarker for Major Depressive Disorder” by Elena Milanesi, Alessandra Minelli, Nadia Cattane, Annamaria Cattaneo, Cristina Mora, Alessandro Barbon, Alessandra Mallei, Maurizio Popoli, Vincenzo Florio, Andreas Conca, Stefano Bignotti and Massimo Gennarelli.

In our study we show a deficit in ErbB3 mRNA levels in leukocytes of patients affected by Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and that this impairment is not affected by the antidepressant treatment neither in human, comparing drug-free and drug-naïve MDD patients, nor in animal model. To our knowledge, few studies have investigated biomarkers associated with MDD in drug-naïve patients. Because of the antidepressant treatment is a confounding factor influencing the mRNA levels of several transcripts, we considered that the drug-naïve state should be a necessary condition to identify diagnostic biomarkers. Our data suggest that ErbB3 might be considered as a biomarker for MDD and we support the usefulness of leukocytes as a peripheral system for identifying biomarkers in psychiatric diseases.

We would greatly appreciate it if you could consider this manuscript for publication as original article in BMC psychiatry.

All authors declare that the material is original research, has not been previously published and has not been submitted for publication elsewhere while under consideration.

Thanking you in advance for your kind attention,

Yours sincerely

Prof. Massimo Gennarelli

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