Reviewer's report

Title: A prospective study of high dose sedation for rapid tranquilisation of acute behavioural disturbance in an acute mental health unit

Version: 2 Date: 10 May 2013

Reviewer: Massimiliano Beghi

Reviewer's report:

The study develops an interesting topic. Episodes of behavioral disturbance are very common in psychiatric settings. Despite the lack of evidence, physical restraint is a common tool and trainings to reduce its use are increasing in all countries. However the use of high dose of tranquilizers is a practice used very frequently. In this case, current data are not available on its efficacy.

The study investigates prospectively the use of this procedure in clinical practice. However, in my opinion, some changes and/or clarifications are needed:

1 A clear definition of acute behavioral disturbance should be done; it could be interesting to make a distinction between aggression against others, aggression self-directed, aggression against objects, claiming etc.

2 In the methods section a table explaining the demographic variables, the diagnosis and the method of admission (voluntary vs non voluntary) should be done and authors should explain if there are differences between patients receiving higher doses and patients receiving normal doses.

3 Still in the methods section, a comparison in differences in severity of ABD between patients receiving higher doses and patients receiving normal doses should be done.

4 A bpm of 60 or lower may be normal in patients: authors should either specify the bpm of the patients before sedation (showing the reduction) or delete this parameter.

5 Authors should provide a better explanation of the statistical analysis: a doubled percentage of adverse events in patients receiving higher dose is not enough for significance. The use of variance analysis or chi square is required for parametric variables.

6 In the results, authors should provide whether a physical restraint also was done along with the pharmachological restraint.

7 In the discussion a paragraph on study limits is required: the non randomization of the sample could lead to selection bias (i.e: maybe patients receiving higher doses have more severe episodes).

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.