Reviewer’s report

Title: Teratogenic risk and contraceptive counselling in psychiatric practice: analysis of anticonvulsant therapy

Version: 1 Date: 14 May 2013

Reviewer: Sanjeev Thomas

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have addressed an important issue associated with the use of anti epileptic drugs. Their objective is to survey the use of anti epileptic drugs for psychiatric indications in women of child bearing age group to determine whether or not counseling by psychiatrists regarding teratogenic risk and contraceptive issues prior to treatment commencement occurred. I have the following comments:

Major compulsory revision

1. Under methodology it has been mentioned that this is a community based retrospective study. But the base population is not well defined. The expected number of women with major psychiatric illness in the child bearing age group needs to be mentioned based on prevalence. It needs to be mentioned if the size of the study population, i.e., 172, matches this expected number.

2. An important finding of this study was the proportion women who received counseling was substantially lower for those on valproate when compared to those on carbamazepine. This discrepancy need further explanation as it is widely known that valproate has higher teratogenic effect than carbamazepine.

3. It may be mentioned if the documentation of counseling regarding teratogenic risks and contraceptive issues is mandatory in your system.

4. It is worth describing the counseling rates according to the practice setting such as teaching hospital, large centers, smaller or solo practices. It may be specified if there is an age dependent difference in the population counseled, i.e., if women of younger age group are counseled more compared to others.

5. With regard to counseling about contraceptive issues was there any difference in the counseling rates according to the drugs used non enzyme inducing drugs versus enzyme inducing drugs as the latter are more likely to interact with oral contraceptives

Minor essential revisions

1. The widely accepted spelling ‘carbamazepine’- need to be consistently used.

2. Background- 2nd line ‘There important role in the management of all phases of bipolar affective disorder has been increasing well recognised’ – should be corrected to ‘increasingly well recognised’
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interest