Reviewer's report

Title: Adult Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and nicotine use: a qualitative study of patient perceptions.

Version: 1 Date: 2 October 2013

Reviewer: Geurt van de Glind

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Yes; see my comments below.
3. Are the data sound?
   Yes
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   See my comments below
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Partly, see my comments.
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

The study represents qualitative findings on the link between ADHD and Nicotine Dependence. As such it is an interesting and important contribution to the scientific literature. I recommend publication, however I have the following
Background

Please add the observed rates of nicotine use in the general population, to compare the rates in ADHD subjects as given by the authors (ref 11-13).


In the literature there is debate on the role of stimulant treatment for ADHD and development of SUD's, including nicotine dependence. Given the nature of this study, this literature should be summarized in the background section. Please include the following study:


Bron TI, Bijlenga D, Kasander MV, Spuijbroek AT, Beekman AT, Kooij JJ.

Methods

I have four major concerns:

1) To what extend is the sample representative for the group of subjects with ADHD and nicotine dependence?

2) How about the comorbid mental disorders in this group? How was this measured (in the results section is stated that all but two subjects had a comorbid disorder)? How do we know the ideas given are related to having ADHD or can be attributed to other disorders?

3) What is the influence of stimulant medication on the ideas subjects have on their nicotine use?

4) It is stated that the level of nicotine use and dependence varies greatly. It might be that heavy smokers have different ideas/views towards smoking than less heavy smokers. Is there a rationale for this heterogeneity in the sample?

Results

I have difficulties in distinguishing theme I from theme III. Theme III is also poorly worked out.

I am surprised to find within theme II both the rebellious/sensation seeking issues and the peer-pressure issues. These seem to me two different types of motivation for smoking?
Discussion

The first theme is discussed comparing the results with beliefs in non-ADHD smokers. Why isn’t this done for theme II and III?

Moreover, "self-medication" in non-ADHD smokers is somewhat strange. So is it possible to use the general population’s believes of the effects of nicotine to compare the ‘self medication effects’ with?

What I mean is: "I smoke cause it helps me doing my tasks, which I cannot do without smoking" = theme 1: selfmedication. "I smoke, for it helps me calming down" might be the general effect of nicotine use.

The discussion states: " We had anticipated that subjects would describe a significant influence of stimulant medication on tobacco use patterns." As mentioned in the 'background' part, I would like to have this better introduced and discussed with more existing literature on this subject.

The final lines of the limitation paragraphs says: " While the views of our study participants did not appear to be significantly different from views of cigarette-smokers without ADHD reported in other studies..."

I don’t think the manuscript makes this clear. In discussing theme 1 three other studies are mentioned. But the scale on which the given themes in the ADHD sample in this study are comparable or are different from the general population is just not clear. To investigate this, the same study should be done in non-ADHD smokers.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

For previous studies on the linkage between ADHD and Substance Abuse grants were received for ICASA (International collaboration on ADHD and Substance Abuse; www.adhdandsubstanceabuse.org) research network (G. van de Glind is director of this Foundation) from pharmaceutical companies (Shire, Eli Lilly & company, Jansen Cilag), from participating institutes (in the ICASA Foundation) and from three not for profit organizations: the Waterloo Foundation, the Noaber Foundation and the Augeo Foundation.

The funding companies, institutes and foundations did not have and will not have influence on any aspect of the study, including research questions, data sampling, data management, data analyses and publishing results. Since September 2010 the IASP study, and the ICASA Foundation function
independent from pharmaceutical companies.

G. Van de Glind was on one occasion consultant for Shire, for which he refused payment. In 2013 he received an unrestricted travel grant from Neurotech and he is (unpaid) member of the advisory board of Neurotech.