Reviewer's report

Title: High vitamin B12 level and good treatment outcome may be associated in major depressive disorder

Version: 1 Date: 8 October 2003

Reviewer: David Mischoulon

Reviewer's report:

General

Good article that should be a valuable contribution to the field. Needs some revisions, but generally well thought out and well written.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

In background section, authors may want to also mention Alpert et al. Folinic Acid (Leucovorin) as an Adjunctive Treatment for SSRI-Refractory Depression. Annals of Clinical Psychiatry 2002;14:33-38.

Minor Compulsory Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

In background section, authors should state a hypothesis regarding their expected findings, in the context of the background information provided.

In discussion section, authors might discuss whether differences in this population and previously studied ones could be due to whether patients were seen as inpatients or outpatients. Latter would be more severely ill and may have worse indices.

In results section, please clarify the wording of the correlation data. As stated, it is worded a bit confusingly. In some instances the authors mention the HDRS score and in others the decline in the score.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Clarify more the rationale for using mean B12 levels. Is this an established strategy?

Clarify who treated the patients in the 6-month period. Was it their regular outpatient psychiatrists? The study doctors? And how were they assessed in the interim between the first and final visit? How often were they seen? What medication adjustments were made? How might all this impact on the authors' findings?

Did treatment variables associate with response? Did response associate with hematological indices? Did presence of adjunct psychotherapy have an impact on response? If data are available, they should be included.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its specialized field or of broad interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

None