Reviewer's report

Title: Zinc sulfate as an adjunct to methylphenidate for the treatment of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in children: A double blind and randomized trial

Version: 1 Date: 4 February 2004

Reviewer: Steven Pliszka

Reviewer's report:

General- This is an interesting paper that is well written and tests an intriguing hypothesis- does adding zinc to methylphenidate enhance its efficacy. The diagnostic criteria for ADHD are appropriate, and appropriate inclusionary/exclusionary criteria have been used for the study. The clinical trial design was also well done, with appropriate outcome measures.

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

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct) The authors should clarify or expand upon the following points:
1. How many times a day was methylphenidate administered (AM and noon or three times a day)?
2. Expand somewhat in the conclusion as to why zinc might be therapeutic- or why increasing melatonin, if that is zinc's effect, would have benefits on ADHD symptoms.
3. Note the lack of a full placebo group (no MPH or Zinc) as a limitation.
4. In the US at least, doses of 1.6-2.0 mg/kg/day (divided bid or tid) are common. the authors might note that had they used higher doses of MPH, more improvement would have been seen in the MPH group.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I have served as a paid consultant to Shire labs, (maker of Adderall XR) and MacNeil (makers of Concerta)