Reviewer's report

Title: Insomnia in school-age children with Asperger syndrome or high-functioning autism.

Version: 1 Date: 2 February 2006

Reviewer: Daniel G Glaze

Reviewer's report:

General This is a well written manuscript concerning an important problem. While there are a number of prior reports concerning sleep problems in autism, this manuscript presents new information and addresses a number of problems of these previous reports. Foremost, the authors study a well-defined sample of a subset of children with autism spectrum disorders rather a heterogenous group of autism; used specific criteria to define the subject group; identify an appropriate control group; eliminate confounding factors such as medication and other medical problems. These strengthen the importance of the findings and provide a model for future research. The literature review is thorough and supports the study. The methods are appropriate; the data is sound and well controlled. The data supports the well balanced discussion and conclusions. The findings are accurately reflected by the title and abstract.

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 suggestions that follow I believe do not represent a major revision but for the reader clarify and provide the ability to reproduce and/or to proposed further studies. 1. Indicate whether the sleep questionnaire has been validated and why this questionnaire, other than for convience because of language considerations, is used rather than other validated questionnaires such as the Child Sleep Habits Questionnaire developed by Dr. Judith Owens; 2. Indicate the specific test used to determine normal intelligence in the subjects and controls--did the controls undergo IQ testing and screen for autism characteristics and whether the two groups were similar for level of intelligence by objective measures; 3. For Table 2 include the specific questions asked in the sleep questionnaires, this information will be helpful for those wishing to use the questionnaire and for whom the cited reference is not readily avialble--or whether they can obtain the questionnaire and scoring design from the authors; 4. Discuss, given the small size and many variables, the possibility of false positives; 5. Include the p values, as was done elsewhere, in the final section under results--insomnia and behaviour.

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:

Consultant, Sanofi-Aventis