Reviewer's report

Title: Metabolic syndrome in Thai schizophrenic patients: a one-year follow-up study

Version: 1 Date: 20 December 2006

Reviewer: Paul Mackin

Reviewer's report:

General
This study aims to define the presence of the metabolic syndrome (using ATPIII and IDF definitions) in a population of Thai subjects with schizophrenia, and to assess the development of the metabolic syndrome during a 12-month follow-up period. The authors conclude that metabolic syndrome may develop rapidly (over 12 months) in this population in individuals who do not fulfill criteria for MetS at baseline.

My main concern with this study is the sample size, and lack of control group (both limitations are acknowledged by the authors). Only 35 patients were followed up, thus limiting the impact of the results and conclusions drawn from these data. Lack of a control group precludes any comparison, in terms of the incidence of MetS, with the background population.

Selection bias is also a significant limitation of this study which prevents extrapolating these data to other populations. Subjects were recruited from a tertiary care facility; individuals who 'took medications for metabolic abnormalities' were also excluded.

Although there is a rationale for excluding patients from follow-up who met criteria for MetS at baseline, there would have been some value in following up this cohort to see how many no longer met criteria at follow-up.

I can see no clear advantage in using 2 definitions of MetS. Using the IDF version alone (given that ethnicity-specific values for waist circumference) would simplify the manuscript.

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

The authors should state how data on family history of metabolic disease was gathered and confirmed. How were dyslipidaemia and hypertension defined?

The authors should consider re-writing the paper and excluding the ATPIII data - I do not think this adds significantly to the overall message.

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

Page 4, para 1, line 2. 'general people' should be replaced with 'the general population'.

Page 4, para 1, line 3. replace 'diseases' with 'risk factors for cardiovascular disease'

Page 4, para 2, line 4. the word 'conditions' should be omitted.

Page 4, para 3, line 13. 'a qualified criterion' should be replaced with 'a prerequisite'

Page 6, para 2, line 2. 'treatment of' should be removed.

Page 7, para 1, line 2. 'advice' (not advices).

Page 8, para 1, line 2. 'high potency...was smaller' (word(s) missing)

Page 8, para 2, line 2. 'condition, should be replaced by 'component'.
Page 9, para 2, line 5. 'all 7 subjects who developed IDF MetS were the 15 participants...' This does not make sense.

Page 9, para 3, line 5. 'caution' and not 'cautions'.

Table 2 (page 16) column 3, heading. Omit '(%)' as percentages are not given

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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 limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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 interests