Reviewer's report

Title:  The Management of Bipolar Mania: a national survey of Baseline data from the EMBLEM study in Italy

Version: 3  Date: 12 February 2007

Reviewer: George Kirov

Reviewer's report:

General
I had requested only minor revisions which the authors have addressed.
I would like to comment on the observation of the other reviewer that Eli Lilly requested 50% of patients to be switched to Olanzapine. I was also involved in the EMBLEM study in the UK and I can confirm that I was not asked to switch 50% of patients to Olanzapine either. I was told that this had been the initial aim of the study, but the company observed that this ratio was kept even without asking participants to do that. Whether I was not asked to switch 50% to Olanzapine because I entered the study later, or because this requirement did not apply to UK sites, I do not know, all I can confirm is that I had complete liberty in including any patient in the study, regardless to what treatment I switched them. During the course of the study some patients were switched several times, so it will be interesting to see the final proportion of different drugs (but this is not what the present study is about).

Of course knowing that the study is sponsored by the manufacturers of Olanzapine introduces a bias for over-prescribing that drug. This should be clearly stated in the paper. I cannot understand why the "Competing Interests" section does not state that this was a sponsored study by Eli Lilly, where recruiting psychiatrists received honoraria for enrolling patients, neither is this fact mentioned in the Methods section. This needs to be made clear.

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 fact that the study was sponsored by Eli Lilly (the manufacturer of Olanzapine) and that the psychiatrists received honoraria for recruiting patients, should be stated in the "Competing Interest" and the "Methods" sections.

Accept after minor essential revisions

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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:

I was a researcher involved in the EMBLEM study in the UK. The honoraria I received were put into an account used for research purposes.