Reviewer's report

Title: The Improved Clinical Global Impression Scale (iCGI): development and validation in depression

Version: 1 Date: 10 July 2006

Reviewer: Ian RH Falloon

Reviewer's report:

This article addresses an important issue, the improvement of a commonly used assessment, the CGI, especially when depressive symptoms are being assessed. It attempts to provide a scale of severity of depression accompanied by a brief semi-structured interview with interater reliability and consensus validity. The scale then is renamed as the improved CGI.

I have some major reservations with the underlying concepts.

First, the value of the CGI is its ability to consider all psychopathology, that is inevitably mixed in most disorders, especially in depressive disorders. The authors appear to have constructed a new depression scale, not improved the CGI per se. Furthermore, the background critical review of the existing instrument is incomplete, several improvements have been made to specify more clearly the 7 point severity scales that have not been discussed.

Thus I am not able to recommend publication, notwithstanding the studies reported in this paper, most of which I found difficult to follow mainly owing to my lack of understanding of aspects of the statistical methodology.

Discretionary Revisions - nil
Minor Essential Revisions - nil
Major Compulsory Revisions - see above