Reviewer's report

Title: Weight management in a cohort of Irish inpatients with serious mental illness (SMI) using a modular behavioural programme. A preliminary report.

Version: 1 Date: 9 April 2008

Reviewer: Yasser Khazaal

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:
Ø Introduction: Page 6, authors said that “The programme has been adapted to be used in an inpatient setting”. Authors should clearly explain (possibly in the methods section) which adaptations were made.

Ø Methods section: 1) It was not clear to which patients the intervention was proposed (To all in-patients, to those who complained weight gain, to overweight patients…?) 2) At what time the patient enters the module, only at the first session or at any other time? 3) Standards for submission to local Ethical Committee may be variable from a region and an other in regard to the analysis of retrospective clinical data. Irish standards should be respected.

Ø Results section: 1) If available, precisions about weight and BMI (and not only the mean weight change) should be added. If the population is overweight or obese, it will be not the same comprehension that for a normal-weight population 2) If available, precisions about previous weight gain during the period preceding the intervention should be added 3) How diagnoses were made and collected by the authors (precisions related to this point should be added on the methods section)? 4) How the data about weight were collected from the clinical centres? Are data of all patients who participated in the programme are reported or possibly, only a part of the data? This point is very important and not clearly explained. A possible way to overcome this difficulty is to give full details about the procedure of collection of data in the “methods section”? 5) If available, report of the pharmacological treatments of the patients should be added. 6) Did the patients had recent modifications of these treatments?

Minor essential revisions:
Ø Abstract: 1) In the background, the sentence “All formats…some patients” should be rewritten. The sentence is a little bit too conclusive. Several studies, but not all, concluded that weight gain can be prevented or reversed. The results of the previous studies are not always statistically significant.

Ø Discussion section: Other limitations should be added such as lack of data on previous weight gain, on eating disorders such as binge eating, as well as lack of data on restraint and lack of follow-up. The point 4 of the comments made on the results section remains one of the major limitation of the study if non resolved.

Discretionary revisions:
Ø Title: I think that the abbreviation (SMI) should be placed in the title.
Ø Abstract: 2) In the abstract (SMI) was not defined.

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:

Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper, either now or in the future? Yes Unrestricted grant from Eli Lilly
- Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this paper, either now or in the future? No
- Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript? No
- Do you have any other financial competing interests? No
- Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper? No