Reviewer’s report

Title: The Self-reported Montgomery-Asberg Depression Rating Scale is a useful evaluative tool in Major Depressive Disorder

Version: 1 Date: 13 July 2008

Reviewer: Leon Flicker

Reviewer’s report:

This study uses secondary analyses of a randomized trial of citalopram versus escitalopram to evaluate a diagnostic instrument, a self administered form of the MADRS, the MADRS-S. Although the authors claim that they used standard methods, they have not referenced the standard methodology for diagnostic tests e.g. see

Whiting P et al,
BMC Medical Research Methodology 2003, 3:25
http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2288/3/25

Some of the problems in the study
1. What was the independent gold standard? Was it the physician administered MADRS? Does this not represent incorporation bias?

2. The patients are limited to the age group 18-65 years and are inadequately described. Was the spectrum of patients limited in other ways? Were they deliberately screened for physical illness? Would not this assist a scale that measures somatic symptoms of depression?

3. Why did you measure the stability of the scale over time only in those subjects whose measures did not change?

4. Repeating the data outcomes for the trial under “evaluative ability” adds nothing to this paper’s aims.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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