Reviewer's report

**Title:** Psychotropic medication in the French child and adolescent population: prevalence estimation from social security data and results from a national self-report study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 3 August 2009

**Reviewer:** Antonio Clavenna

**Reviewer's report:**

This is an interesting paper that address an important issue: the epidemiology of psychotropic drug use in the paediatric population. However, I have some doubts concerning the reliability of the model chosen to estimate the prevalence at the national level.

**Major Compulsory Revisions.**

Some points should be addressed and clarified:

The CNAMS-TS French Comtè subset represents only 2% of the CNAMS-TS national population. Is it representative of the national paediatric population in terms of distribution by gender and age, pharmaceutical consumption, etc...?

How many children and adolescents were affiliated in 2004 to RSI in the French Comtè region?

On the basis of the doubts on the methodology, and the difficulty for the reader in understanding the model used to estimate the prevalence at the national level, I think that it would be more appropriate to estimate the prevalence of psychotropic drug prescription only in the French Comtè region (using the regional subset of RSI and CNAMS-TS databases). Alternatively, the study may report the national data of RSI database.

Differences between gender and age should be evaluated using statistical analyses.

In the discussion section the authors stated that boys used psychotropic drugs to deal anxiety but in table 7 it is reported that 72% of girls took psychotropic against anxiety versus 40% of boys.

The statement in the discussion section should be corrected or better explained.

Some drug utilization studies performed in France and concerning psychotropic drug prescription to children and adolescents were missed and should be added to the bibliography (e.g. Sevilla-Dedieu C J Child Adolesc Psychopharmacol. 2008;18:281-9). A comparison with the estimates reported in this study should be done.

**Minor essential revisions**
- There are too many tables. I think that tables 2-6 can be joined in a unique table.

- The prevalence of drug prescription is low, and it should be better reported as per 1,000 individuals instead of per 100 individuals.

Discretionary revisions

- If possible, some data regarding the most frequently prescribed drugs should be provided

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'