Reviewer’s report

Title: Comparison of the consumption of antidepressants in the immigrant and native populations in a Spanish health region: an observational study.

Version: 1 Date: 1 March 2010

Reviewer: Corrado Barbui

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The present study analyzed differences in exposure to antidepressant drugs between the immigrant and the native population of a Spanish health region, as an indicator of inequity in mental health care. A cross-sectional design was adopted, and 232,717 autochthonous and 33,361 immigrants aged 15 years or older attending the public primary health centres of a health region were included.

The study is epidemiologically well-conducted and clinically reasonable, and it adds interesting insights to the compelling area of drug use in immigrants versus natives.

I do not have major compulsory revisions. I only have the following minor revisions:

(1) In the introduction there is a sort of a priori consideration that differences in antidepressant drug use between immigrants and natives are indicators of inequity in mental health care. Would it be possible to substantiate with data this statement, taking also in consideration that differences might be the consequence of other aspects, including for example cultural variables associated with the country of origin, or differences in the rate of specific mental disorders? The result that rates differ according to the country of origin seems to indirectly support this idea.

(2) In the methods I would define what classes of drugs authors classify as antidepressants. I would encourage them to use the ATC system (which is already used to classify AD in table 6).

(3) would it be possible that immigrants received AD prescriptions from other sources that are not captured by your system? Would you be so kind to discuss this possibility?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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