Reviewer's report

Title: How healthy are chronically ill patients after eight years of homeopathic treatment? - Results from a long term observational study

Version: 1 Date: 22 August 2008

Reviewer: Charlotte Paterson

Reviewer's report:

This is a large-scale and unique observational study of homeopathic patient outcomes now reporting on its 8 year follow up data. The paper is well set out and all sections are appropriate in content, detail and presentation. It is clearly written, although the editor will be able to improve the English grammar in some places. I have highlighted some of the more important grammatical/typo errors below.

Apart from this I have very few suggestions for improvement and consider that the paper could be published with no, or very few minor, corrections.

Discretionary revisions:

1. Page 4. 'In this paper we present only the long-term results (2 and 8 years), for more details on earlier time points refer to [10].'

This paper is almost entirely concerned with the 8 year data, only presenting some 2 year data for comparison. So I think this sentence is a bit confusing for the reader and should just say 8 years.

2. Table 1 indicates that the presenting symptoms were of long duration. More could be made of this within the results and discussion, because it strengthens the likelihood that the improvement is not purely due to the natural history of the condition.

3. Table 2. This is entitled ‘Number of patients who reported improvements or worsening of complaints at the 8-years follow-up, grouped whether or not they still were under homeopathic Treatment’

I think it would be clearer to say ‘Number of patients whose change in symptom scores indicated improvements or worsening …..

4. Discussion. 1st paragraph: ‘Improvements were more pronounced in younger patients, females, and those with greater disease severity at baseline’

Would it be correct to add ‘those with multiple infections’ to this list, as this is useful clinical information?

English language errors (minor essential revisions)

The younger patients are children, not adolescents.
P5 ‘groud these therapies’ should be ‘grouped these therapies’

P6. ‘If patients reported of cured complaints we replaced missing values with a severity=0 in subsequent records’ would better be ‘If patients reported that their complaints were cured, we replaced ……’

P8. ‘we found slidely higher effects’ should be ‘slightly’.

P9. ‘Moreover, the already observed QoL improvements are impossibly caused by regression to the mean alone’, should be ‘it is most unlikely that regression to the mean accounts for all the QoL improvements that we have described’.

Conclusion: ‘These effects maintain for as long as 8 years’ should be ‘These effects were maintained for eight years.’

Table 5 ‘agee’ should be ‘agree’

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**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’