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: 28 August 2008

Reviewer: Wayne B Jonas

Reviewer's report:

This is a clearly written, straight forward, long-term observational trial of homeopathic treatment for a mixed group of chronically ill patients.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1. The findings are interesting, but the article definitely needs some statistical evaluation. The primary reason for this is that there are no diagnostic restrictions and there are significant follow-up differences. Of the 3981 individuals or 3677 who were initially contacted, approximately 2722 were followed-up. Interestingly, 1/3 dropped out for reasons of improvement, 1/3 dropped out for reasons of no improvement, and the other 1/3 continued. Therefore, an accurate assessment of what homeopathic treatment was on the middle third that actually continued is needed. Statistical evaluation of confounders is appropriately approached but this requires statistical evaluation by an expert, which I am not. Several questions that may be confounders here are the wide and unrestricted diagnostic categories, the clinical and personal relevance of the improvements over the long period of time, whether a 2-point clinically relevant evaluation is valid and why children were left out unless the term “adolescence” refers also to children. Of importance is that 41% of the population apparently used other CAM approaches and so it is difficult to say that this was due to homeopathic treatment.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. There are minor English corrections that need to be made. Second paragraph, line 7: “In” should be used instead of “Of”
2. Page 1, paragraph 3: “Little data” is the best term
3. Page 2, paragraph 1, line 2: “recruitment” should be used here
4. Page 2: does “adolescence” also include children and to what age does this occur?
5. Page 5: it is unclear what is grouped in the regression analysis in the evaluation of potential confounders

Discretionary Revisions:

1. It would be good to read through the manuscript to correct the English grammar.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests