Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic review with meta-analysis: Cytokines in fibromyalgia syndrome

Version: 1 Date: 7 September 2011

Reviewer: daniel J wallace

Reviewer’s report:

The paper is worthy of publication.

1) Some parts of the results simply recite the tables and the prose is a bit turgid. The text should be more interpretive

2) Rather than being a review of existing publications, it should also guide an investigator so that future studies will not make some of the errors or repeat the deficiencies that the authors note. Hence, a paragraph should be added relating some of the following points: 1) For serum or plasma, at least two samples should be drawn on separate days 2) the time of day draw should be similar due to circadian changes, 3) patients should be off medication that can influence results, 4) the duration of symptoms of FM should be listed, 5) the setting and environment of study patients should reflect community rheumatologic fibromyalgia ideally, 6) power calculations should be performed in advance 7) serum cytokine levels probably are a poor reflection of cytokine activity, production, and its not certain how much is in cells vs in tissue. Therefore, stimulated production of cytokines or tissue staining for cytokines is superior. The best methodology for doing this should be briefly mentioned.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests, but the authors of the meta-analysis gave their study the highest rating of all the studies and they should have recused themselves.