Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors predicting change from the initial DMARD treatment during the first 2 years of Rheumatoid Arthritis: Experience in the ERAN inception cohort

Version: 1 Date: 21 March 2013

Reviewer: Geoff Littlejohn

Reviewer’s report:

This is a useful contribution from an early rheumatoid arthritis cohort examining predictors and reasons for change of initial DMARD therapy within the first two year period.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Line 1 should read “rapidly establishing a …”.
2. I think the conclusion should relate directly to the data in the first instance. Conjecture about “further research” could best be left in discussion.
3. There are some minor grammatical errors throughout the paper, e.g., page 9, line 2, baseline, DAS28”.
4. On page 10 under “SSZ monotherapy” – should this read “were less likely to be sero-positive”?
5. In discussion I think there should be more clarification as to whether the higher HAQ-disability and worse mental health relates to disease activity or to other factors.
6. In regard to the influence of “mental health status on DMARD discontinuation” I think the author should include comment about the variables that define fibromyalgia in rheumatoid arthritis populations. I think they should quote work from Fred Wolfe which has defined the high prevalence of such characteristics within RA populations and the influence of that problem on future potential assessment, symptom report and change in treatment. In other words, change in treatment may well relate to high pain and high symptom reporting rather than to disease activity. I think there are facts that are already established that might be usefully inserted into the discussion, although I appreciate that this group did not specifically examine fibromyalgia but looked at non-specific generic mental health indices.

Level of interest: An article of importance 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 declare that I have no competing interests.