Reviewer's report

Title: Cyxlo-oxygenase-2 selective inhibitors and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs: balancing gastrointestinal and cardiovascular risk

Version: 1 Date: 28 September 2006
Reviewer: Leslie Cleland

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General
I sent my review via your web based review process last week. My assessment was that the paper is not suitable for publication. Salient reasons include the following:
- Yet another company sponsored 'meta-analysis' of COX-2 publications, in this case including meta-analyses within the meta-analysis!
- Lack of clear selection process for papers studied
- Selective referencing and lack of balance in the discussion. The acme is the suggestion that the difference in health impact for survivors of a GI haemorrhage compared to those who survive a stroke or heart attack may only be only subjective.
- Reservations about who would benefit from such a paper beyond corporate interests marketing COX-2 inhibitors. It is hard to see the paper being used as a direct source by many prescribers.
- Lack of discussion on alternatives to NSAIDs. For example fish oil in anti-inflammatory doses has been shown to be NSAID sparing (e.g. CS Lau et al BJR 2003), has not been associated with GI bleeding, has a COX inhibiting effect and reduces cardiovascular risk factors (e.g. LG Cleland et al. J Rheumatol 2006). The discussion thus revolves almost entirely about whether one accepts risk for GI bleed or CV events rather than avoidance of both.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)