Reviewer's report

Title: Attitudes of dermatologists in the southeastern United States regarding treatment of alopecia areata: a cross-sectional survey study.

Version: 1 Date: 21 July 2009

Reviewer: Andrew G Messenger

Reviewer's report:

Major Revisions
- none

Minor Essential Revisions
- ref 3 (Delamere et al) is a systematic review, not a meta-analysis (Discussion)

Discretionary Revisions
1 The higher frequency of 'no treatment' in children with alopecia areata, compared to adults, is not altogether unexpected but it is good to have hard data. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the study, however, is the high frequency of treating severe forms of AA (AT/AU), in adults and children, with treatments that are generally acknowledged (and for some this is evidence-backed) not to work, e.g. topical steroids, minoxidil, anthralin in AU.

Why do dermatologists do this? Does the survey provide any answers? If not can the authors comment in the discussion.

2 The management of AA involves more than treatment, particularly in view of the poor or non-response to medical treatments. Did respondents comment on these broader issues - e.g. counselling, patient groups, psychological support?

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