Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of the in vitro skin permeation of antiviral drugs from penciclovir 1% cream and acyclovir 5% cream used to treat herpes simplex virus infection

Version: 2 Date: 17 December 2008

Reviewer: John J Docherty

Reviewer’s report:

I have read the authors response to my questions and now have a significant problem with this paper as written. The authors state that their skin samples are not viable. The relevance of their study to the penetration of drug in viable tissue is questionable but not discussed by the authors. What relationship do their results in non-viable tissue have to that of viable tissue? They could be quite different and this paper could be quite misleading. As such I am reluctant to approve this paper for publication unless the authors are willing to address this issue in their discussion. For example in the second paragraph of their discussion the authors talk about the classic episode of herpes labialis causing erythema, edema, ulcer, etc. None of this can happen in their model and is misleading to the reader. Theirs is a passive model with none of the inflammatory features or enzymatic activity of viable tissue and it is the authors responsibility to clearly enunciate this in their discussion.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.