Reviewer's report

Title: Insomnia among hospitalised patients with advanced disease admitted to a Palliative Care Unit: a prospective observational study on its prevalence and association with psychological, physical and environmental factors.

Version: 2

Date: 18 February 2014

Reviewer: Martin Mücke

Reviewer's report:

Comments to the authors:

The authors present data from a prospective observational study on the prevalence of insomnia and its association with psychological, physical and environmental factors. Insomnia was assessed using the Sleep Disturbance Scale (SDS) vs. a single screening question. Furthermore, the incidence of sleep disturbance factors was recorded and categorized. The authors report a high prevalence of insomnia influenced by psychological, physical and environmental factors. Physical factors such as pain and dyspnoea were the most common factors interfering with insomnia. The present study shows that the factors nocturnal rumination and daytime sleepiness lead to moderate to severe insomnia. The study highlights that nocturnal rumination was one of the most prominent factors influencing insomnia.

The MS reports interesting data in this field of clinical research. The manuscript is well and comprehensively written. The questions posted by the authors are well defined. Data presentation is clear and includes appropriate statistical methods.

This interesting MS contains important data. However, some minor concerns have to be addressed:

General comments:

Some more recent studies (2013) with similar findings in other patient groups should be cited.

I wonder why the authors did not choose a more divergent scale such as the EORTC QLQ-C30 scale? This would allow additional evaluation of quality of life, pain, and fatigue. This would possibly turn out more predictors of insomnia.

Some minor points:

Some minor typos should be corrected.

Keywords: Add “pain” and “Sleep Disturbance Scale” as keywords.

Background, 5th Paragraph: Female gender and non-white race increase the risk of incident insomnia. There is a higher incidence in women (12.9%) than in men (6.2%). Other important factors for insomnia are coffee, alcohol, and physical
problems like chronic kidney disease and urinary problems (Singareddy et al.; 2012). The authors should discuss these points with regards to their own data. Namely the comparison of group means of men vs. women in the present study.

Background, 7th Paragraph: “Patients are normally admitted to PCUs for relatively short periods.” How many days? The reference is missing.

Methods, Procedures: A reference to the Declaration of Helsinki must be added.

Table 2.: The authors should give means (SD) for SDS items as well.

Table 3.: HADS is not a psychological symptom. The authors should report this findings elsewhere.

List of references the author should consider to be cited [1–6]:

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests