Reviewer's report

Title: Can authorities appreciably enhance the prescribing of oral generic risperidone to conserve resources?: findings from across Europe and the implications

Version: 1  Date: 16 March 2014

Reviewer: P Blier

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This manuscript is an interesting analysis of the utilization of generic risperidone in some European countries. Their general conclusion is that generic, and less expensive, risperidone has not increased as much as one would have expected to save money on medication purchase. The analyses appear to have been carefully carried out. The results are in general adequately discussed.

Here are some issues to be addressed by the authors.

1) It is striking that the rate of utilization of generic risperidone is directly proportional to the decrease in price (table 4). Yet, no emphasis is put on this. For instance in Ireland, the difference between brand and generic is only 28% and the rate of generic is 14%. Basically, why attempt a switch if there is little financial gain.

2) On page 6, it is mentioned that marketing activities may influence prescribing, which is obviously true. However, some of these commercial efforts are often driven by availability of new data. For instance, clinicians have recognized the general weight neutrality of aripiprazole and later the benefits of the medication in major depressive disorder in patients with incomplete response to an antidepressant. Similarly, quetiapine ER was shown to be beneficial in the latter indication and in bipolar depression. These potential advantages account for an absolute 23% increase of these two drugs, the equivalent of the drops of the other medications listed.

3) The slopes in table 2 are not likely to mean much to a non-specialist. They should be converted to percentages.

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

No conflict of interest