Reviewer’s report

Title: Effects of Erythropoietin on Depressive Symptoms and Neurocognitive Deficits in Depression and Bipolar Disorder

Version: 2 Date: 24 May 2010

Reviewer: Prathap Tharyan

Reviewer’s report:

I have read the response of the authors to my comments and am glad to note that point 3 has been addressed partially by the inclusion of the statement, “Global Assessment of Function (GAF) scores at week 9 will be reported in addition to the primary outcome.” However, while the authors state that “confidence intervals will be reported in relation to the proportions in remission” in their response, this has not been incorporated in the manuscript; I request that this be done after the sentence in the section on outcomes that reads, “The secondary outcome is remission defined as HDRS score < 8 at week 9”, in order that the authors remember to do this.

Regarding my point number 2, on clinically important improvement, and the authors’ assertion that a difference of 3 points on the HDRS would be clinically significant in this group of patients, as attested by similar assertions in published literature, we shall have to agree to disagree, since only by eliciting participants’ views about this or using some objective measure to validate this, would the current debate on this issue be resolved.

Considering that this study is under-way and the design cannot be changed, I recommend that this point be considered for discussion of the final report and the protocol be published after incorporation of the sentence in the preceding paragraph.