Reviewer’s report

Title: Extended varenicline treatment in a serious cardiopathic smoker: a case report

Version: 2 Date: 16 October 2014

Reviewer: Paolo Paredi

Which of the following best describes what type of case report this is?: Findings that shed new light on the possible pathogenesis of a disease or an adverse effect

Has the case been reported coherently?: Yes

Is the case report authentic?: Yes

Is the case report ethical?: Yes

Is there any missing information that you think must be added before publication?: Yes

Is this case worth reporting?: Yes

Is the case report persuasive?: Yes

Does the case report have explanatory value?: Yes

Does the case report have diagnostic value?: No

Will the case report make a difference to clinical practice?: Yes

Is the anonymity of the patient protected?: Yes

Comments to authors:

In this interesting and useful report the authors describe how an unusually prolonged administration of varenicline successfully helped a patient with ischemic heart disease to quit smoking. Notably, contrary to the current concerns by some, the administration of varenicline was not associated with any cardiovascular side effects despite its administration for 9 months.

This case report is well written and timely in view of the current controversy regarding the side effects that varenicline may have, and therefore has a very high citation potential. However, the limitations of a case report should be acknowledged some of the conclusions require toning down and the patients description needs improving.
Major Points
I have the following minor suggestions to improve this already well written report:

1) A more thorough description of the medication in question is required. More specifically, its mechanism of action, advised dosage, side effects etc need to be included in the text.

2) It may be of benefit to include a brief chronological history of the FDA concerns and public warning for Varenicline. Within this history it is crucial to describe more clearly:
   a) what is meant by “cardiovascular events” as this was the main outcome of the meta-analysis
   b) Please clarify that that meta-analysis was ordered by the FDA and was sponsored by the producer of the drug, Pfeizer. Include number of patients enrolled, number of centers, etc.
   c) It is crucial to highlight that occurrence of cardiovascular events was higher in the varenicline treated group but this was NOT statistically significant

3) A better description of the cardiological history of the patient described in this case report is required. More specifically. How many vessels disease? Where were the stents placed? What type of stents? Was there a history of arrhythmia? What were the current medications at the time of the smoking cessation intervention? Blood pressure? Heart rate? Was the patient suffering from COPD as well? Weight, height ?

4) Of course, as this is a case report, it is vital to tone down the strength of general conclusions as these cannot be drawn based on a single case. More specifically, please acknowledge that even though varenicline was safe and successful in this specific case, it is still vital to “weigh the risks of Chantix against the benefits of its use” as indicated by the FDA.

Minor Points
1) Replace “serious” with “severe” in the title
2) Abstract: a) replace “even more” with “particularly” in heart patients
   Replace “The extended varenicline therapy was clinically monitored and it allowed the patient to consolidate the abstinence” with “The extended varenicline therapy was clinically monitored and allowed the patient to consolidate the abstinence”

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare no competing interest