Reviewer's report

Title: Antidepressant Prescribing in Irish Children: secular trends and international comparison in the context of a safety warning

Version: 2
Date: 18 January 2015

Reviewer: Linda Wijlaars

Reviewer's report:

Review – Antidepressant Prescribing in Irish Children: secular trends and international comparison in the context of a safety warning

The manuscript describes a very clear and well-written study, with the international antidepressant prescribing rates as an interesting bonus. The manuscript warrants publication and I only add a few minor comments.

Minor essential comments

1. Suicide vs suicidal behaviour: at several points in the manuscript, the authors mentions that antidepressants are linked to an increased of suicide. However, as this link is based on RCTs that did not observe any completed suicides (rather they observed increases in suicidal thinking, self-harm, and attempted suicide), it would be better to write that SSRIs are linked to suicidal behaviour.

2. Prevalence – In the international comparisons, the authors compare rates of antidepressant prescribing between different countries. They state all rates are prevalence rates, however, the UK study (Wijlaars et al. 2012) measured incidence.

3. Spelling mistakes – the authors misspell GlaxoSmithKline (line 74 and Table 1), missed a space (line 145) and added an extra space on line 223 (before the comma). On line 263, I think 'lowest' would be better than 'smallest'. They also switch between using 'antidepressants' and anti-depressants', and 'SSRIs' and 'SSRI's'. Please be consistent.

4. References – something appears to have gone wrong with some of the references. For instance, the references to the international studies do not line up (the German study is referenced as [21] while it is actually [20] – all references seemed to have moved up 1 number).

Discretionary revisions

5. Abstract – in line 44, the authors say that antidepressant rates "were higher for younger boys", could they add a few words to say this is compared to younger girls? Although it is clear what they mean when reading the manuscript, it could be misinterpreted.

6. Discussion – in line 297, it might be preferable to replace 'FDA' with 'IMB'? That seems more consistent with your reasoning in the rest of the discussion.
7. Table 2 – Could the results of this table be presented in Figure 1?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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