Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Transcranial bright light treatment via ear canals in seasonal affective disorder: a randomized, double-blind dose-response study

**Version:** 3  
**Date:** 5 May 2014

**Reviewer:** Ybe Meesters

**Reviewer’s report:**

MS: 209785922117993

Research article

Transcranial bright light treatment via ear canals in seasonal affective disorder: a randomized, double-blind dose-response study Heidi Jurvelin, Timo Takala, Juuso Nissilä, Markku Timonen, Melanie Rüger, Jari Jokelainen and Pirkko Räsänen

BMC Psychiatry

The comments and reactions of the authors on my review are rather disappointing and at some points they are satisfying. I have still problems with the following two points

1. Especially the reaction on the major problem of this study: the lack of a placebo condition. This problem should be mentioned in the discussion with more emphasis.

The results can be totally explained by means of placebo effects. Placebo effects can be very strong. For example, in a meta analysis of 96 studies Rief et al. (2009) found that 68 % of the effects of antidepressants can be explained as a placebo effect.

At least this possibility should be mentioned in the discussion, only a warning to interpret the results with caution is not enough.

2. In the abstract, the results based on the SIGH-SAD should be mentioned. The reason therefore is that this instrument is used as a ‘golden standard’ in SAD research, so comparisons with other studies is easy, and patients are include based on the scores of this instrument.


**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests