Reviewer’s report

Title: The course of Depression in Late Life as measured by the Montgomery and Aasberg Depression Rating Scale in an observational study of hospitalized patients.

Version: 2 Date: 22 February 2015

Reviewer: Inez Ramakers

Reviewer’s report:

Minor Essential Revisions

General

The paper described findings from an observational study, which investigated the course of Depression in Late Life (DLL) and which factors were associated with response and remission. In general, this paper addresses an interesting topic, is clearly written, and reflects the natural heterogeneity of an old-age psychiatry department. There are only some minor concerns however, that should be clarified before publication.

*What was the effect of the MADRS score at study entry. Had severe depressed patients more/less decline in MADRS score, more/less remissions?

*The authors did a good job in mentioning the limitations of this multi-center, observational study, including the large variation in the days of stay in the hospital. Some information about the effect of this variation might be of interest. E.g. how was the admission period related to number of remissions, responders, and baseline MADRS score?

*The authors should spend some words about a possible explanation why demented patients might have less benefit from anti-depressant treatments.

Very minor comments

*The overlap between responders and subjects experiencing a remission should also be mentioned in the Results section, not only in line 432.
*Line 333/334 are unclear in comparison to the line above.
*Typo: line 346

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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