Reviewer’s report

Title: Prospective, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled phase IIa clinical trial on the effects of an estrogen-progestin combination as add-on to inpatient psychotherapy in adult female patients suffering from anorexia nervosa

Version: 2 Date: 02 Mar 2018

Reviewer: Jennifer Jordan

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have made thoughtful and thorough responses to the reviewer comments. The amendments to the statistics in relation to power calculation and justification for handing of missing data is well done. I agree with the authors' rationale for using non-parametric tests as that has also been my experience that eating disorder symptom variables are frequently skewed at baseline but particularly so post-treatment with symptom improvement.

Are the authors aware that specialist supportive clinical management (SSCM) has recently been included with CBT-ED and MANTRA as the three recommended treatments for adult AN in the 2017 NICE guidelines? IPT is not included in that list. The Lindardon et al review, while of relevance, would have missed that because of their focus on behaviour therapies. The authors might consider whether or not they wish to amend their introduction to reflect this new NICE guidance however I will leave that to the authors to decide. All issues raised have been addressed. We certainly need more biological treatments for anorexia nervosa and I wish the researchers well with their study.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.
I am able to assess the statistics

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Acceptable

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In this revision, I have drawn the authors' attention to the updated NICE guidelines in relation to their literature review, given they were probably released whilst this paper has been under review. The NICE guidelines now recommend a therapy developed by our research team for adult anorexia nervosa (Specialist Supportive Clinical Management, SSCM) and do not include interpersonal psychotherapy for AN that the authors have stated has an evidence base. I have left it to the authors to consider whether or not they reference the updated NICE guidelines in their literature review.

I have a potential competing interests of a financial nature in that nominal payments for delivering SSCM training workshops are paid to my institution however in the past, I have received these payments in a personal capacity.

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