**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Predictors of the effectiveness of an early medication change strategy in patients with Major Depressive Disorder

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 09 Sep 2018

**Reviewer:** Waldemar Greil

**Reviewer's report:**

It is a very important study that is clearly presented and has clinically relevant findings. A group of depressive patients (non improvers after 2 weeks of therapy with escitalopram) are switched to venlafaxine (EMC) or treated unchanged (TAU).

Significant findings are presented, e.g. that recurrent MDD and typical depression had a higher remission rate under EMC than under TAU, i.e. that they benefit better from the rapid change of medication. After Bonferroni correction, these findings are no longer significant.

The paper can stimulate to carry out analogous studies - if possible with a larger number of cases and thus higher statistical power.

Then the described findings - for example in a meta-analysis of several studies - could be statistically significant (even after Bonferroni correction).

This could be emphasized even more in the discussion and in the conclusions.

"The study yielded statistically negative results" - although true - puts the important results into perspective.

Now more in detail:

The presentation of the results (p. 11 and p. 12) is difficult to read and partly probably not correct.

S.12 line 242 should read: remission rates were 22.6% and 20% (not 27.3%, please check).

It would be easier to control the data if the exact numbers in the figures 1a to 1c were given - in the figure itself or in the legend.

On page 11, on line 229, it says "versus 7.6" on line 232, but "7.5%", meaning the same value (better uniform).

P 10: Table 2 "Suicidality" better than "suicidality" (capital letter)
Termination point missed at p 18 line 412 between "Mainz." and Monika Seifert and p 19 line 422 to "Andernach."

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

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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