Reviewer’s report

Title: Treatment Patterns and Sequences of Pharmacotherapy for Patients Diagnosed with Depression in the United States: 2014 through 2019

Version: 0 Date: 29 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Hans Rittmannsberger

Reviewer's report:

An observational study on an interesting topic, relying on a huge data base. The methodology seems to be sound, yet the complexity of the issue forces to some simplifications which are discussed by the authors.

There are some points of critique:

The inclusion criteria need to be explained in more detail in the methods section

o It remains unclear for what reason two outpatient diagnoses of depression were required to be included into the study.

o p12, line24: "...we required treatment to occur at the time of or following the first diagnosis of depression …" This should be included in the methods section - and how does this pair with the second diagnosis?
All together the results differ largely from common treatment recommendations

o half of the patients stay without treatment

o one third is treated with other drugs than antidepressants first-line

o the amount of combination or augmentation therapies (which by many authors is preferred compared to a switch) is small.

o Could the methodology of the study account for some of these results? Or is there just a gap between theory and practice and then -why? Of course, this question was not the topic of the study, but it seems to be its message and deserves more comments.

Early discontinuation of antidepressant treatment is a major problem, not only in the USA (see citation 10), but worldwide 1-3. Given the possibilities of this data base this issue should be covered too.


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.

Unable to assess

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable
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