

## **Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Benzodiazepine Prescribing Behaviour and Attitudes: A Survey among General Practitioners Practicing in Northern Thailand

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 15 February 2005

**Reviewer:** Rob Sanson-Fisher

### **Reviewer's report:**

- i. The background to this paper covers most of the significant literature in the field and makes a reasonable and valid case regarding the need to understand prescribing habits in relation to benzodiazepines in developing countries.
- ii. The authors would be aware that the methodological weaknesses associated with a survey of medical practitioners asking them to report on prescribing habits are considerable. In particular, there is a strong probability of social bias especially when undertaking a study and concerning a medication which is known to have detrimental effects. Some acknowledgement of the methodological weaknesses of this form of data collection would have been a value in the introduction.
- iii. Was it possible to collect data about the non respondents? While a 58 percent return rate is not unreasonable for general practitioners some attempt to examine response bias would have been of interest.
- iv. Some may wish to argue with the suggested intervention strategies to reduce the inappropriate use of benzodiazepines by general practitioners. A brief review on the evidence regarding modification of healthcare providers'™ behaviour using the EPOC literature might be helpful.
- v. The argument that the survey may not reflect real practice and as a consequence the authors focused on outstanding findings is not compelling. Some effort should be taken to more carefully think through this issue and reflect this in the paper.

### **Summary.**

This is an interesting paper which deserves publication. However it would benefit from significant editorial work to reduce the length of the paper and more careful consideration of some of the methodological issues raised in the section above. If this was undertaken effectively publication is recommended.