

Format for ANSWERING REVIEWERS

September 7, 2014



Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the edited manuscript in Word format (file name: 12823-Review. doc).

Title: **Light treatment for seasonal winter depression in African American *vs* Caucasian outpatients**

Name of Journal: **World Journal of Psychiatry**

No. 12823

Author: Hyacinth N Uzoma, Gloria M Reeves, Patricia Langenberg, Baharak Khabazghazvini, Theodora G Balis, Mary A Johnson, Aamar Sleemi, Debra A Scrandis, Sarah A Zimmerman, Dipika Vaswani, Gagan Virk Nijjar, Johanna Cabassa, Manana Lapidus, Kelly J Rohan, Teodor T Postolache

The manuscript has been improved according to the suggestions of reviewers:

We very much appreciate the time the reviewers have put into reading and commenting our manuscripts, and their thoughtful feedback. Below we address the issues point by point. We are highlighting the changes to the manuscript in green, for easy visibility.

Reviewer I52445212

Issue: Introduction is too short

Response: We have now expanded the Introduction.

Issue: The selection bias and implication for adherence to light treatment must be acknowledged.

Response: We appreciate reviewer's comment and we agree with it. We have now added a sentence in that regard in the Discussion, under limitations.

Issue: Excluding patients on medication is a weakness of the study that needs to be acknowledged. It is less likely that individuals with SAD will be treated with light alone.

Response: We have acknowledged this limitation in the Limitations section. The reviewer is correct that medications could stabilize antidepressant treatment. However, in regard to reviewer's second

point, our data do suggest that a very sizable proportion of patients with SAD do not use medications. If we were to accept the “statistical noise” induced by different medication regimens we would have needed a prohibitively larger sample size, thus budget, to allow statistical adjustment for medications.

Issue: It would be useful to know how many patients had bipolar 2 disorder and how many patients had unipolar major depression

Response: Only three individuals were bipolar 2, two African Americans and one Caucasian. The difference was not statistically significant, and the results of the study unchanged after diagnostic adjustment. We have now included this information in Table 1

Issue: The fact that it was an open label study may have had a bearing on the result

Response: We agree with the reviewer. We have previously acknowledged the fact that we did not have a control group, but we now changed to say that this is an open label design. This is now the first limitation acknowledged in the Limitations section, as indeed, different placebo responses between the two race groups might have, indeed, contributed to the result.

Reviewer 02445374

Issue: Limited number of participants

Response: We agree and acknowledge the limited sample size in the Limitations section.

Other changes: We would like to change the title of the paper to **Light treatment for Seasonal Affective Disorder in African American and Caucasian patients, a comparison study.**

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teodor T. Postolache', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Teodor T. Postolache, MD
Professor and Director

Mood and Anxiety Program