

Online supplement

Protocol modifications

In the original protocol we had planned to use a light box emitting 100 lux as the placebo. However, the light emitted was too dim and it would have been immediately obvious to the participant that they had been allocated to the placebo arm of the trial. Since careful attention to masking is particularly important in the evaluation of non-pharmacological treatment we changed the protocol to employ a light box emitting 2000 lux as our placebo control. The lamp still appeared very bright (in the absence of the 10 000 lux comparison) but the light emitted should have been

at subtherapeutic levels according to the SAD literature on dose–response, which does not indicate any efficacy below 2500 lux, at an exposure of 20 min.^{13,14}

Deviations from protocol

Two patients started and finished the 12-week treatment phase of the trial within 2 weeks of the protocol stipulation of 4 January to 28 March, in order to accommodate their travel/holiday plans.