

MB:jcm

22 April 2015

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

RE: Dr. Isabelle Bauer's Immigration Visa Petition

Dear Immigration Examiner,

It is my privilege to offer my advisory opinions as an independent expert as to Dr Isabelle Bauer's original and premier discoveries. My opinions are based on my review of her remarkable research contributions in the field of bipolar disorders and cognition research. Dr Bauer has risen to the top in this specific research discipline. Her continued research work in the United States will greatly benefit the American people by improving cognitive rehabilitation and helping individuals with bipolar disorder reintegrate into society.

I am an Alfred Deakin Professor of Psychiatry at Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia. My primary research interest pertains to the inflammation in bipolar disorder and the development of anti-oxidant treatments for this devastating disorder. Even though I have never worked with Dr Bauer, I have known her work for some time because of our common research interests in the relationship between neuroinflammation and cognition in bipolar disorder. Hence I feel I am well positioned to testify on Dr Bauer's research accomplishments and significant impact in this area.

Bipolar disorder is a serious mental disorder, affecting anywhere from 2 to 4 per cent of Americans. Traditional estimates suggest bipolar disorder affects about 5.7 million Americans in any given year, or about 2.6 per cent of the US population (National Institute of Mental Health, 2010). A recent large-scale epidemiological survey, the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (Kessler et al., 2005) reported a 3.9 per cent lifetime prevalence of bipolar I and II disorders. Bipolar disorders result in significantly higher costs to society. These disorders have been found to create significant economic burden, and the annual cost of these disorders is estimated to range from \$10 billion to just under \$50 billion. These disorders are also associated with increased risk of suicide as well as impairment in social functioning. In summary, bipolar disorders have significant costs for the people afflicted as well as for the society as a whole.

Despite being a young investigator, Dr Bauer has already made very significant impact to the field of bipolar disorder research. Dr Bauer's research findings have laid a solid foundation for the development of novel interventions to target cognitive impairment in bipolar disorders and improve the long-term outcome in individuals suffering from these serious diseases. Dr Bauer has a cross disciplinary background in Cognitive Neuroscience, Neuropsychology, and Psychopharmacology. This unique combination of research background and skills enables her to make extraordinary contributions in her research area. During the past few years, Dr Bauer has made a lot of important discoveries and significant contributions in the field of nutrition and neurocognition. Her current work on the neurocognitive and related genetic features of bipolar disorder has

gained the respect and recognition of her peers as demonstrated by the presentations at national and international professional conferences for her work on omega-3 fatty acids, pharmacogenetics and cognitive functioning in offspring of bipolar parents. It is noteworthy to mention that her Ph.D. work led to 3 publications exploring the changes in visual function and brain activity following supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids, otherwise called fish oil. Since the beginning of her postdoctoral fellowship in 2013, she has published 10 papers and 1 invited book chapter in top international scientific journal in psychiatry such as the Journal of Affective Disorders and the Journal of Psychiatric Research. So far, her papers have been cited more than 40 times by other research groups.

Given my experience and involvement in the field of psychiatry, I fully and strongly support Dr Bauer's request for permanent residence in the United States based upon her proven outstanding track records and contributions as well as her desire to further pursue research in the U.S. Dr Bauer has made substantially greater contributions than the majority of her peers. I am confident that it is in the best interest of the U.S. to attract and retain an outstanding researcher like Dr Bauer. If you have any questions or need additional clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Michael Berk, MD., Ph.D.

Alfred Deakin Professor of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, Deakin University.

Director, IMPACT Strategic Research Centre (Innovation in Mental and Physical Health and Clinical Treatment).

Professorial Research Fellow, The Florey Institute of Neuroscience and Mental Health, Orygen The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health and the Department of Psychiatry, University of Melbourne