Reviewer's report

Title: Trial of an educational intervention on patients' knowledge of atrial fibrillation and anticoagulant therapy, INR control, and outcome of Treatment with warfarin (TREAT)

Version: 1 Date: 26 February 2010

Reviewer: Gregory Peterson

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the submission. It is interesting and well-written.

My main methodological concern relates to the control (usual care) group. How will the information that is provided to these patients be controlled and standardised? This will be very difficult, especially when different hospitals are involved. How can the investigators be sure that medical (or pharmacy...or even nursing) staff will not provide more information than simply “information about their condition and the need for anticoagulant therapy only”? This seems very unlikely. For instance, I would expect (and hope) the hospital pharmacists to provide much more information than this on warfarin for a patient commencing therapy. It would be very poor practice not to do so. This issue must be addressed.

Adherence /persistence with therapy should be an outcome measure. Hopefully not, but it is possible that the extra information could actually scare some patients and they might decide to cease warfarin therapy. On the other hand, it is to be hoped that persistence will increase with the educational program, if it well designed. Either way, it should certainly be measured.

Apart from the TTR, the frequency of INR testing should also be compared in the two groups.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests