Reviewer’s report

Title: Availability, price and affordability of cardiovascular medicines: A comparison across 36 countries using WHO/HAI data

Version: 1 Date: 2 March 2010

Reviewer: Sue Jowett

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Discretionary revisions

The question posed by the authors appears to be well defined and the three outcome measures are outlines and described.

The methods appear to be appropriate but the description of the methods is rather dense at time. Although many of the acronyms and techniques may be familiar to a health economics audience, they will be less familiar for the audience of this journal and need to explained more clearly.

The data have been obtained by WHO/HAI, and the methods used aim to provide reliable information, therefore one assumes that the data are sound, and the paper present a secondary analysis.

The discussion could cover more about different systems of procurement and health systems in different countries which may have an impact on both availability and price. However, most of the discussion is relevant although there is some repetition, for example, it is mentioned several times that generics are priced lower than originator brand products. Overall I think the discussion could be tightened a little and more focussed. Strengths and limitations are addressed. The conclusions should be made stronger and it contains some rather general statements such as “to improve the situation, changes in medicine policy are frequently necessary”.

Regarding the presentation of results, the y axis on the figures should be made explicit even though it is also in the title.

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.