Reviewer's report

Title: Adherence to the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) Guidelines for Chronic Heart Failure - A national survey of the Cardiologists in Pakistan

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Reviewer: Gerasimos Filippatos

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The aim of this study was to evaluate the awareness of the cardiologists in Pakistan and their attitudes towards the 2005 European Society of Cardiology (ESC) guidelines for Heart Failure (HF) and also assess barriers to adherence to guidelines.

The main problem of the manuscript is that the authors evaluated the awareness and attitudes towards the ESC guidelines when only 13.8% considered ESC guidelines as relevant or very relevant for guiding treatment decisions while 92.8% of the local Cardiologists chose AHA guidelines. Probably this doesn’t introduce any serious bias in the study because the differences between the 2 guidelines are minor but it would be better to present the questionnaire they used to evaluate treatment because of the differences in acute heart failure which is not covered in the previous AHA guidelines. Moreover the questionnaire used to evaluate the barriers to implementation of guidelines should be presented.

The authors evaluated the adherence to the guidelines with 3 different clinical scenarios. The comments in the discussion about the clinical scenarios are difficult to follow. It is written that «The proportions of respondents who made recommendations that completely matched those of the guidelines were low: 7% (Scenario 1), 0% (Scenario 2) and 20% (Scenario 3)». It would be interesting to see in the appendix or in the online supplementary material of the manuscript the clinical scenarios and the questions asked.

This will help the reader understand better the discussion of the manuscript.

A total of 372 cardiologists were approached; 305 consented to participate (overall response rate, 82.0%). How did the authors, initially, approach the cardiologists? How many reminders? Was any difference between those who answered (accepted) immediately and the others?

In the «Background», the first paragraph is not necessary. Data included in this paragraph can be found in any manuscript about heart failure. Add in this section a couple of more sentences about implementation of heart failure guidelines and how they improve outcome.

The discussion is too long.

Correct errors/typos

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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