Reviewer's report

Title: Identification of effective screening strategies for cardiovascular disease prevention in a developing country: using cardiovascular risk-estimation and risk-reduction tools for policy recommendations

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Reviewer: Margaret Thorogood

Reviewer's report:

This paper reports some interesting data on the prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors in the Malaysian population, demonstrating, for example, the very high prevalence of hypertension and the clustering of high risk in the poorer groups in the society.

Major discretionary revisions

The authors have carried a modelling exercise to determine the costs and effectiveness of different strategies for screening for high risk individuals. The problem is that they have used only the Framingham Risk Score to determine level of cardiovascular risk of individuals. They argue that the Framingham Score tends to overestimate risk but that it has been shown to accurately risk stratify. This is probably more or less true for populations of mainly European origin, but may well not be true in an Asian population where, for example, central obesity and diabetes may have different importance in determining risk. This limits the credibility of the findings. Some exploration of the robustness of the findings, and comparison with other Risk Scores would have increased the certainty of their conclusions.

Minor essential revisions

There is no indication in the title or abstract of the country where this research is based

In the tables the authors talk about ‘current screening strategy’ and about screening the general population. it took me a while to work out that by general population they mean the population aged over 30, and by current screening strategy them mean screening all individuals aged over 50 years, although in the background to the paper they state that the current national policy was to screen the general community.

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