Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient perspective on the management of atrial fibrillation in Europe

Version: 1 Date: 1 June 2013

Reviewer: Antonis Manolis

Reviewer’s report:

In the present survey, Bakhai et al conducted a telephone interview in 5 European countries of ~300 patients in each country with atrial fibrillation (AF) regarding treatment of AF at a time prior to approval of newer anticoagulants. Patient satisfaction was reported at 85.5%; problematic issues were also reported regarding coordination of primary and secondary care and a lack of patient participation and support. These are interesting and important findings, however, this survey engages mostly with patient’s satisfaction with regards to anticoagulation monitoring rather than patient satisfaction with control of symptoms and arrhythmia recurrences, and this should be stated by the authors and probably reflected in the title. Also there is no information regarding stroke occurrences. Neither is information available with regards to the type of AF, e.g. paroxysmal or permanent.

In the Limitations section, the use of the old and unreliable CHADS2 instead of the newer CHADS2-VASc scoring system should be included. It should also be made clear in the same section that the investigators involved in the survey are heavily conflicted with or employees of pharmaceutical companies and the way the data are being presented give a clear impression that they are preparing the readership for the new products of their companies.

One point that is not clear relates to the diagnosis of AF (Table 1) in 67-92% of patients; if that is the case, the rest should have been excluded from the survey. Another important point that needs emphasis is that 78-90% of patients included were indeed receiving anticoagulation, which is a most satisfactory percentage. However, there is no information about the INR status.

With regards to the statistics employed, they should be reviewed by a professional statistician as this goes beyond the expertise of this reviewer. However, testing differences among 5 countries using two-sample t-tests is not proper and a methodology with analysis of variance seems more appropriate.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests