Reviewer's report

Title: A comparison of heart failure in Chinese and non-Chinese Canadians

Version: 1 Date: 22 September 2013

Reviewer: Nadia Khan

Reviewer's report:

The authors present an interesting paper describing many aspects of heart failure comparing Chinese from non-Chinese Canadians. This work also represents the largest analysis to date of heart failure in Chinese descent patients.

Major Compulsory:

1. Having said this, the authors should clarify what is new in this analysis compared to previous work.

2. The paper is generally well written but if numbers are provided in tables, they do not need to be repeated in text.

3. This paper focuses on hospitalized heart failure rather than all heart failure and heart failure readmissions as much of heart failure is diagnosed and managed as an outpatient. The authors should change the title, results, and discussion of heart failure to reflect that it is hospitalized heart failure and therefore, may underestimate the risk of recurrence and this would select for a sicker HF population. This should also be noted as a limitation.

4. The authors are attributing causes of heart failure based on comorbidity within the past 5 years. Given the inherent limitations in making this assertion, I would recommend that they change to 'associated' with HF.

5. The authors should provide justification of using the Charlson-Deyo comoribidity variables to adjust for comorbidity in their risk adjusted models.

6. Coding accuracy for issues like valvular heart disease, atrial fibrillation, hypertension etc. should be provided, as these are important variables in this paper.

7. This paper would have been improved if linkage to a cardiac registry were possible to obtain angiogram data, EF and NYHA classification (please include in the limitations).

Minor Revisions:

8. Development of cardiogenic shock should be included if these data are available to try to gauge the severity of heart failure.

9. The authors may wish to comment on why the prescribing rates for HF
medications appear to be somewhat lower than expected.

10. The authors note that as one of the main findings, the mortality, were not different comparing Chinese with non-Chinese patients and that this may be due to access. This does not seem to fit with some work suggesting that visible minorities in Canada see family physicians as much as non-visible minority patients.

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:

none.