Reviewer's report

**Title:** Obstacles and alternative options for cardiac rehabilitation in Nanjing, China: an exploratory study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 6 December 2013

**Reviewer:** Karam I Turk-Adawi

**Reviewer's report:**

This is an interesting manuscript that attempts to explore barriers and alternative models for cardiac rehabilitation in China. Most of the published cardiac rehabilitation studies are from high-income countries. There is a dearth of studies examining CR as a secondary preventive measure for cardiovascular disease (CVD) in middle- and low-income countries, where death rates of CVD are increasing alarmingly. I think some clarifications would strengthen the study.

- **Major Compulsory Revisions**

  1.A. Abstract: State the confidence intervals of the odds ratios.

  1.B. Methods: I am confused about your dependent variable; you used "lower CR acceptance" as in the abstract, "low CR participation rates " on page 10, and "refusal to attend cardiac rehabilitation" in Table 2. What is your dependent variable? is it acceptance vs. non-acceptance before patient discharge or attendance vs. non-attendance assessing CR enrollment after discharge? In your statistical analysis, for the logistic regressions, you should indicate clearly: the dependent variable, the data were used i.e. of which group and N of patients, and the covariates for each model.

  1.C. Results: For the first paragraph, add the p values (<.05). Readers will understand that these factors are significant.

  1.D. Some terms should be clarified:

  Results. p 10, line 3: "without access" how did you define or measure it? in terms of what? For example, 31.9% of patients who agreed to attend EP, but not CR, had free medical care, are these patients "without access"? I would recommend making the comparison with patients who did not opt to participate in CR/or did not participate (based on your dependent variable).

  Results: p10, Line 4: How did you define "lower-income", is there a difference between low-income and lower-income? Same comment for "lower socioeconomic status" in the introduction?

- **Minor Essential Revisions**

  2. A. Methods, p 6. The transition phrase" in addition" below gives an indication of in addition to the 372 patients. Suggestion: replace it with however.

  "In addition, 31 patients failed to follow up, and 13 patients were unable to
complete interview, leaving a population of 328 patients (Figure 1).

2. B. Method: p 8: Clarify this sentence, i.e., specify who were assessed and which program? "We further assessed the reasons for joining the program, such as receiving more information about disease and risk factors."

2. C. Results: Line 8: Specify "management strategies" in the text.

2. D. Tables 2 and 4: indicate (under the table):
a. the statistical procedure used to create the table.
b. dependent variable
c. the reference group for each categorical variable as shown in the attachment

2. E. Since patients were allowed to choose more than one reason, this sentence "Lifestyle changes and career advice were considered important information for half of the study patients." is incorrect. It should be corrected to reflect that each of them was important in less than half of the study patients.

2. F. Page 13, paragraph 2, line 7: fix this" acute care acute,"

Discussion: With regard to low CR participation rate, can you support your finding with a study from China or other middle-income country, in addition to those you highlighted from high-income countries?

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.