Reviewer's report

Title: Effects of Self-Management Intervention on Health Outcomes of Patients with Heart Failure: A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials

Version: 3 Date: 22 June 2006

Reviewer: John Cleland

Reviewer's report:

General
I have read the revised version of this paper. Unfortunately it is not much improved.

Firstly the authors confuse the European Society of Cardiology and the European Union which are far from the same thing.

The authors use strange references which are difficult to access for many international readers. For instance, reference 5. They seem to have retrospectively changed the selection criteria for their trials which would consider a major flaw. This seems more designed to save the authors work rather than to respond in a scientific manner to the original review. The authors must clearly see that it is artificial to separate the advice which a patient receives and seeks to interpret from their health care providers from those who deliver the information. Patients are as much if not a greater participant in studies of telemonitoring as in the studies described here.

Indeed, on page 13 the authors recognise this. The study with least benefit was the one where patients were given advice without health care professional support. Surely by the exclusion of telemonitoring and nurse education programmes the authors are failing to see the true importance of their analysis.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)