Reviewer's report

Title: Long-term survival after initial hospital admission for peripheral arterial disease in the lower extremities is as poor as survival following other atherosclerotic diseases

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Reviewer: Elmo Mannarino

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The manuscript by Vaartjes I. et al. provided estimates of absolute short- and long-term risk of death after an initial hospital admission for PAD in the lower extremities. The results of the study are convincing but also replicative of other large prospective studies that have deeply explored this issue. In addition, major concerns for the interpretation of the results come from the design of the study and the limited number of confounders that have been considered in the analysis of data.

Major Compulsory Revisions
In this study only the generic "cardiovascular disease" and diabetes were considered as possible confounders of the association between PAD and risk of death. However, many other relevant factors may have contributed to the poor prognosis of PAD patients that have not been considered. Thus, for instance, impaired renal function, traditional cardiovascular risk factors, low haemoglobin levels, systemic inflammation and many other covariates might have contributed significantly to the increased mortality.

Also, stage of PAD had certainly a strong influence on PAD patients prognosis, that has been ignored.

The influence of medications has not been taken into account thus further lessening the value of the study.

Finally, the results of the present study cannot be compared with other studies that have already explored the prospective association between PAD and risk of death; this because the baseline clinical characteristic of PAD patients of the present study are mostly unknown.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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