Author's response to reviews

Title: Cardiovascular screening in general practice in a low SES area.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed our manuscript entitled 'Cardiovascular screening in general practice in a low SES area', which we would like to submit for publication in BMC Family Practice.

In several countries including the Netherlands population based screening for cardiovascular disease has received attention to improve the management of cardiovascular risk factors. Several screening models have been proposed, but response rates in especially lower socioeconomic classes lag behind. A more direct involvement via general practitioners to improve attendance rates is impeded by the workload of screening activities. In the current study we report the results of a study using support by a general practice laboratory to organise and perform a cardiovascular screening program within the general practice. The chosen general practice was in an area with a low average socioeconomic class. The response rate and the number of newly identified persons with cardiovascular risk factors, was high. Thus, in our opinion the described screening model may be of interest for the readers of BMC Family Practice.

This manuscript has not been published previously and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. Publication of the article is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out. No potential conflicts of interest are present.

On March 31th some requested additional information was submitted:

1. Information on ethical approval. The following information is added to the revised manuscript:

   The screening performed by the general practitioner in cooperation with the general practitioner’s laboratory was not registered at a medical ethics committee. Comparable cooperative screening facilities between general practitioners and the laboratory already existed several years for diabetes mellitus and COPD. The participating general practitioner in this study and the laboratory wanted to extend these screening facilities, in the interest of the local patients. The region of the general practice is known for its elevated cardiovascular risk and in general patients increasingly demand medical screenings. With the current methods, experiences from the diabetes screening could be used to offer a screening programme embedded in general practice including a guarantee for appropriate follow-up. Afterwards
it was decided to publish the findings of this - at least for the Netherlands - novel initiative.
This is in agreement with the declaration of Helsinki paragraph 31: The physician may combine medical research with medical care only to the extent that the research is justified by its potential preventive, diagnostic or therapeutic value and if the physician has good reason to believe that participation in the research study will not adversely affect the health of the patients who serve as research subjects.

2. A copy of the questionnaire is uploaded as a supplementary file. The questionnaire is in Dutch. If desired, we can provide a translation.

Thank you for your consideration.
On behalf of all authors,

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