Reviewer's report

Title: Heart failure patients' experiences with continuity of care and its relation to medication adherence

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Reviewer: I Al-Zakwani

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Review
By Dr. Ibrahim Al-Zakwani

Title: ‘Heart failure patients' experiences with continuity of care and its relation to medication adherence’.

Authors: Annemarie A Uijen, Marije Bosch, Wil JHM van den Bosch, Hans Bor, Michel Wensing and Henk J Schers

Overall
The paper is slightly confusing to follow in some respects. It would certainly benefit from a review by an English-speaking person.

Title
The title does NOT include study design as indicated in the BMC Family Practice website “Instructions for Authors”<http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcfampract/ifora/>.

Abstract
The abstract does not mention the statistical tests used as outlined in the BMC Family Practice website “Instructions for Authors”<http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcfampract/ifora/>.

It is stated in the Methods section that “Continuity was defined as a multidimensional concept including personal continuity (seeing the same doctor every time), team continuity (collaboration between care providers in general practice) and cross-boundary continuity (collaboration between general practice and hospital)”. However, the Results section ONLY presents results on the association between “personal continuity” and medication adherence. The authors do NOT mention any association, whatsoever, between team continuity and cross-boundary continuity with medication adherence. These are important primary findings. They also need to be presented.

Please quantify and add a p-value in the statement “Higher scores on personal continuity were significantly related to better medication adherence” at the end of the Results section.

The Conclusion should be streamlined to reflect the main findings of the study.
Introduction
All statements of facts need to be referenced. For example, “Heart failure is a chronic disease with a high prevalence, reaching 1-2% in western countries” is not referenced.

Methods
When was the study conducted?
Which area in the Netherlands were the GPs located? Were they representative of the country?
First 2 paragraphs of the Analysis section of the Methods are in the wrong place. They should be in the beginning part of the Methods just before the analysis section.
The Method needs an elaborated statistical analysis section. Just stating “We used cross tables to analyse the relation between continuity of care and patients’ medication adherence” isn’t good enough. One needs to know what statistical analytical tests were employed?
Are the numbers sufficient? No power calculations performed.

Results
1. Can the authors present general demographic information at the beginning of the Results section, such as age, gender, etc in summary form?
The Authors mention, in the last paragraph of the Results section, “We found no clear relation between experienced team or cross-boundary continuity and medication adherence.” This sentence is partly contradictory to what’s presented in Table 4, where an association between team continuity of care and medication adherence is shown with a significant p-value (p=0.04).

Since the primary outcomes of this study are centered on the correlation between the multidimensional continuity concept (personal-, team-, and cross-boundary) and medication adherence, I would have preferred to see more elaboration on the last paragraph of the Results section.

Discussion
Again contradiction. The Authors mention, in the 2nd paragraph of the Discussion section, “We found no relation between experienced team or cross-boundary continuity and medication adherence.” This sentence is partly contradicted with what’s presented in Table 4 where an association between team-continuity of care and medication adherence is shown with a significant p-value (p=0.04).

The “limitation section” of the Discussion is usually placed towards the end of the Discussion and not before comparing and contrasting with other prior published papers.

Conclusions
The Conclusion should be streamlined to reflect the main finding of the study.

References
The references do NOT follow the format outlined in the BMC Family Practice website “Instructions for Authors” <http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcfampract/ifora/>.

Tables
The tables do NOT follow the format outlined in the BMC Family Practice website “Instructions for Authors” <http://www.biomedcentral.com/bmcfampract/ifora/>.