Reviewer's report

Title: How does gender influence the recognition of cardiovascular risk and adherence to self-care recommendation? A study in Polish primary care

Version: 2 Date: 22 July 2013

Reviewer: Kate Jolly

Reviewer's report:

The premise behind this paper is an interesting one – that women and men may respond differently to the recognition of cardiovascular risk and this response may affect their self-management activities. However, I found the paper quite difficult to follow, I think it needs more explanation about the psychological concepts and about the research process. I have listed the revisions required below:

Major compulsory revisions

The methods state that 150 consecutive participants were recruited, yet then goes on to explain that 16 did not participate because of time constraints. It would be useful to include some information about the process of recruitment: when was consent taken? Over what time period did recruitment take place? Were consenting people brought back for their baseline questionnaires and the appointment with the physician, or did this all occur at recruitment? Were additional tests done to complete the SCORE? It would be helpful for the reader to have a brief summary of the components of SCORE.

The 6 month follow-up needs more detail. How was it undertaken: post, in the practice, opportunistically? Did all 134 participants respond at 6 months?

The paper needs a much clearer description of the participants. If 150 consecutive participants were recruited, then it is likely that their CVD risk will vary and it is likely that the women will have a lower risk profile given the age of the participants. Table 1 needs to include the risk score of all the participants and ideally the recommended actions in terms of lifestyle modifications and medications commenced.

On page 4 the authors discuss how women often delay diagnostics and preventive procedures. The picture is more complex than is described in this paper. Women are generally more frequent users of primary and preventive health services than men, although it is true that women may also put their own self-care behind that of their family duties. I think the paper needs to acknowledge the complex picture more. It is also true that women may perceive themselves to be less at risk of CVD than men and thus delay preventive activities for CVD due their belief about their lower risk.

Page 5 line 4: the term 'vague' may better be expressed as inconclusive. The
following two sentences may also be written more clearly, perhaps: Research describing women's evaluation of their physical health is contradictory, with reports that regardless of their lower CVD risk women evaluate their health as poorer than men, (refs) or in some cases better than men (ref).

Page 8: it would be useful either here or in the background to have more description of what task-centred, emotion-centred and avoidance-centred styles are and why they may be important.

The results need to start with a description of the CVD risk of the men and women.

In table 2 and table 4 I am uncertain about what analysis has been done. The analysis section in the methods suggests it is a t test, although for a t test one would usually present a mean and standard deviation or difference between means and 95% confidence interval of the mean difference. This needs clarifying, as does the column labelled Quarter’s sum. I presume ‘M’ is mean, if so it needs to be written in full.

I suggest that tables 5 and 6 are merged

Minor essential revisions

Page 9 line 5: a fatal....

Discretionary revisions

Page 11, para 2, line 6: sentence starting 'The higher the risk.... ' is rather sweeping. It might be better changed to: ...."Polish Mother" seeks to self-care, possibly because her family is in danger.

Table 1: having 2 decimal points for the percentages is unnecessarily precise, one would be sufficient.

**Level of interest**: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review**: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests**: 

'I declare that I have no competing interests'