Reviewer's report

Title: Attitudes, difficulties and educational needs to manage Alzheimer's disease in France

Version: 2 Date: 4 January 2013

Reviewer: Michael Pentzek

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This is an interesting and well written paper. Nevertheless, some major methodological issues have to be considered.

„collected primarily by pharmaceutical companies’ representatives“

>>> unusual way of recruitment; has to be explained

„GPs participating fully in the inquiry were compensated.“

>>> Which compensation? Paid by whom?

The Health Barometer is not explained; what other modules were asked beside the dementia module? This is important for the appraisal of possible context effects within the questionnaire/between the items.

„with the AD-module questions being posed only to about half the GPs selected randomly“

>>> Please give a flowchart with the number of GPs selected FOR THE AD MODULE as the base population (not all selected GPs) and the numbers of these GPs who responded/not responded (with reasons). It must be possible to calculate a response rate for those who were a priori selected for the AD module.

„This questionnaire was created by a working group composed of experts in public health, specialists (neurologists, geriatricians), representatives of family associations and institutions.“

>>> There is no expertise in general practice included in the construction of a questionnaire about general practice? This is a major methodological shortcoming, as members of the later target population have to be included.

The items of the questionnaire as well as its development are not reported in adequate detail. Why and how were these questions selected? Please report the questions and response categories (if given) as well as the items’ underlying theoretical constructs. How were the questions pretested/piloted?

Confusion arises regarding two paragraphs:
a) „identifying their attitudes, difficulties and educational needs to manage AD“
b) „The second and third themes referred to the doctor’s attitudes either in his/her clinical practice (e.g. the use of tests and the frequency of disclosing the
diagnosis to the patient and his/her entourage) or in his/her relationship with
patients or in the management of different aspects of AD (e.g., comorbidities,
coordination of care, information about available social assistance and the
management of behavioral disorders). The fourth and last item was the GP’s
self-perception of his/her level of training concerning certain aspects of managing
AD patients: communication with the patient, communication with the family,
announcing the diagnosis and nondrug treatments of the disease."

>>> A table would be very helpful which clearly explains the connection of
construct and item, including the following columns: Construct (i.e. attitudes,
difficulties, educational needs), theme (e.g. test use), question, response options.
Furthermore, it is not clear, what attitudes are measured, as the examples in the
text are not intuitive and refer more to practice than attitude (e.g. “use of tests
and the frequency of disclosing the diagnosis to the patient and his/her
entourage” are practice, not attitude).

There is confusion in the text as the terms „items“ and „themes“ are intermixed.
The multivariate analyses should be explained in much more detail and more
structured: which analyses were made (regression? ANOVA?), with which
dependent variable and which independent variables?

Tables 3 and 4 should include declarations of the multivariate analysis method
and of course p values for single variables.

In the text it is said that frequent disclosure of the diagnosis and test use are
indicators of good quality care. This is debatable. Please cite evidence for that!
And also cite general practice literature contributing to this debate.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being
published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the
statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.