Reviewer’s report

Title: Practice nurse involvement in primary care depression management: an observational cost-effectiveness analysis

Version: 1 Date: 5 July 2013

Reviewer: L Hakkaart-van Roijen

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? The question was well described; however from the abstract the definition of the low/high level model of practice nurse involvement is not described. The subject; the use of commonly collected data to classify and assess cost-effectiveness is of high importance.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? The methods are well described in the paper.

3. Are the data sound? Primarily, the data are used to classify the depression patients. This is an important research question. However, the study seems to reflect that the commonly patient data are not valid to classify depression patients. Moreover, the researchers did not test their results on validity, the clinical standard (assumed to be the golden standard). Furthermore, the response rate of the study was very low, so the generalization of the study results is relatively low. The secondary aim of the study was conducted on data that were not validated (and based on a low response rate), consequently the answer to this question is rather hypothetical.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? The low response rate and absence of validation tests reduces the scientific value of the paper.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? The experience of the researchers (they report that data collection was time consuming) reflect the common experience of the fact that clinical data bases serve other goals than the aim of classification and costs effectiveness analyses. This subject is often underexposed in current studies.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? The researchers indicate that the results need further validation, however in absence of this validation the value of this study is limited.

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? The researchers clearly indicate that some studies use anti-depressant therapy as proxy of severity of depression. However, this is probably not valid.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? The abstract should be adapted, see comments.
9. Is the writing acceptable? The writing is acceptable

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

all