Reviewer's report

Title: A Prospective Clinical Trial of Specialist Renal Nursing in the Primary Care Setting to Prevent Progression of Chronic Kidney: A Quality Improvement Report

Version: 3
Date: 15 July 2014

Reviewer: Joanna Stewart

Reviewer's report:

As this study is uncontrolled using selection criteria which restricted the population to be high risk at baseline on outcomes measures, and factors related to them, it is very important that it is interpreted throughout mindful of this limitation. Most of the comments below are where this has not been done. While the design certainly limits the conclusions that can be drawn it is still important to publish the results of this study to inform future research.

Major
1. Abstract Methods should include selection criteria as these are important for interpretation of the results
2. Abstract conclusions – need to be softened to better reflect the strength of evidence which can be drawn from this study – ‘has the potential’ is too still too strong. Also perhaps ‘Further, larger, controlled studies …
3. Statistical methods. It is not clear why the so called secondary (incorrect!!) analysis is reported in the methods and table. It is not referred to in the text of the results so adds nothing to how the results have been interpreted and is inappropriate. It should be dropped from the methods (and table 3)
4. Discussion page 18 line 16 – too strong. As this was not controlled you can not even state it was associated. Reword – could say something like during the course of the nurse led intervention
5. Page 22 line 6 – sentence about regression to the mean. It is indeed very plausible that there was some influence of regression to the mean – this discussion needs to be strengthened (and the ‘less plausible’ removed). It should be explained in more detail that the selection criteria meant that those included were all at the extreme of the distribution of measures the same as or associated with many of the outcome measures and had been through a period of poor attendance to appointments. As this study is uncontrolled it is very likely that some of the improvement in measures observed was due to regression to the mean. It is reasonable to argue that the time period of severity of symptoms prior to selection may have reduced this effect but it remains a very definite, unquantifiable limitation on the interpretation of the results.
6. Conclusions – again has the potential to is too strong. Perhaps is feasible and may
7. Conclusion line 7 - ‘appears to’ is too strong
8. Table 3 drop last column (secondary analysis)
9. I was unable to see any reference to table 4 – is it required? If included it
   needs to be mentioned in the results.

Minor
  1. P11 , line 25 – missing word
  2. Results – Correct Inconsistency of numbers on table and first line – table says
     36 available at 12 months
  3. Discussion page 19 line 19, 20 – needs rewording
  4. Conclusion second sentence needs rewording

Discretionary
  1. Table 3 The number of decimal points reported in the p values is excessive
     and meaningless.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests