Reviewer's report

Title: Weight related health status of patients treated by dieticians in primary care practice: first results of a cohort study.

Version: 1 Date: 2 October 2013

Reviewer: Sandra Capra

Reviewer’s report:

Well done on getting a national sample of dietitians to take part in this study, which should yield valuable information.

major compulsory revisions:

1. The authors need to provide some background to the Dutch system of health care and the organisation of dietetics services within this. I was not able to “picture” what the primary care dietetics services were – are they private practices of groups of dietitians? Or are they government funded ambulatory services connected to hospitals or community centres? Or a mixture? Is it common for dietetics practices to be large groups independent from other health care providers? This is of interest to gauge the degree to which patients need to exert themselves to attend for example.

2. There is literature dating back more than 50 yrs that relates overweight/obesity to SES, so these findings are unsurprising and need to be placed in perspective - what has happened is that obesity is now appearing across all SES bands for example. There is also considerable evidence on dietetics services and weight management and I think line 69 should be revised.

Weight Loss Success in Metabolic Syndrome by Telephone Interventions: Results from the SHINE Study Weinstock, R.S., Trief, P.M., Cibula, D., Morin, P.C., Delahanty, L.M. 2013 Journal of General Internal Medicine , pp. 1-9


3. – The methods section requires revision. The methods describe what is in the questionnaires but not how the questionnaires were selected, how they were validated if they are new questionnaires, why they did not use standard tools etc. It implied that patients self reported, but later stated that the dietitians completed the forms. This needs some clarity.

Also the dietitians were asked to provide 10 patients each – it is not clear what instructions were given – were these a sequence of 10 consecutive patients on a day or week? Were they asked to randomly select patients from their files using some kind of random allocation system?
Was there training for dietitians in standardising measurements (other than the waist measurement described) or was this deemed unnecessary?

4. The discussion requires revision. The discussion indicates that (line 192) “our results implicate(sic) that weight loss management should be adjusted to the individual…” No evidence is presented that supports this.

5. The conclusion needs a complete re-write to relate to the data that are presented, ie that the study was effective in recruiting dietitians to participate, and that the dietetics group is representative of the population of dietitians, and that the authors were able to recruit the full target number required for the cohort study. They could also make some conclusions around the characteristics of the patient sample, ie despite best efforts, 2/3 of those recruited were women etc etc

6. The manuscript should be reviewed for clarity of language – especially the research question and the following lines: 72, 81, 87, 91, 145, 167, 187, 192. Please also note that the international spelling for dietitian is "dietitian" not "dietician".

Minor essential Revisions

7. The data in the tables are good, but no attempt has been made (that i could tell) to see if the sample of patients was representative – there is discussion on the fact that the dietitians are representative (well done!) but no reference to the patients – although it is stated in line 187, there are no data provided that supports this statement in the tables. It would be good to check if the age/gender mix reflects the overweight/obese population or even if those who were referred as against self referred were different groups.

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

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

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests