Reviewer's report

Title: Care for post-stroke patients at Malaysian public health centres: Self-reported practices of Family Medicine Specialists

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Reviewer: Supasit Pannarunothai

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The paper provides good evaluation on the care of post-stroke patients by family medicine specialists in Malaysia. The findings raise the awareness that care for post-stroke patients was inadequate, family medicine specialists were minimally invoked in the shared care processes, subsequently leading to recommendations for improving more acceptable outcomes.

However, the paper needs the address bigger health systems contexts such as:

1. What the authors classified as secondary care, and the proportions of care to post-stroke patients as taken part by the secondary care. The paper mostly focused on the linkage of tertiary care (specialist stroke services) with primary care (family medicine specialists). It overlooked a rather large contribution from secondary care.

2. The general descriptions on primary care services in Malaysia are necessary to fully understand country specific contexts. Does the system rely on a gate-keeper concept? To what extent the family medicine specialists contribute to the whole country primary care system. For my rough calculation, for the population of around 27 millions and 176 family medicine specialists; the population to FMS ratio was as high as 150,000 which would not lead to a good primary care system. Would the low utilisation of post-stroke patients to FMS be explained by the provision of other (not-formally trained) general practitioners?

3. The descriptions of five main themes in qualitative section were not well written, as many parts were presented in phrases rather than full sentences (e.g. line 8 on page 13 “More service –physiotherapy, OT in primary care clinic”. This style of presentation did not provide clear findings, as readers did not understand whether the situations were positive or negative.

4. As the paper faced a low response rate, the authors discussed that the responders had a bit longer experiences than non-responders, but concluded that they were representative in terms of themes presented. The authors also mentioned recently established stroke registry. Is it possible to compare the proportion of cases solely taken care by FMS, neurologists and other doctors to validate for representativeness of the findings. Certain strong biases were prominent such as the degree of referral from neurologists/internal medicine to FMS, the higher shared care between neurologist specialists and FMS, etc.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

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

**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.