Reviewer's report

**Title:** Online follow-up of individuals with gastroesophageal reflux disease using a patient-reported outcomes instrument: results of an observational study

**Version:** 2 **Date:** 21 June 2013

**Reviewer:** Jan Gunnar JH Hatlebakk

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a study that documents to some extent the concept of defining groups of dyspeptic patients by internet surveys, and following up by repeated symptom questionnaires.

A main problem is selection bias, since particularly the PPI user group is likely to consist of PPI partial or non-responders, furthermore the study is for practical reasons open only to internet users. It can be argued that more people are internet users than are consulters for GERD (supported by the finding that only 37-45% actually visited their PCP). It must be emphasized that symptoms compatible with GERD is not a diagnosis, although GerdQ is designed to exclude dyspeptic symptoms of epigastric pain and nausea to some extent by weighting the negatively.

The two patients groups can not be compared, as all assessment variables and endpoints are different. In non-PPI users, the definitions do not make sense, since small or larger changes in GerdQ score crossing (or not) the cutoff of "8" are all classified the same.

In the PPI users group, endpoints are more in line with what is used in clinical studies.

All this leaves us with a pure feasibility study.

In the "Statistical analysis" section, we are presented with more variables which should have been in the Outcomes section, or elsewhere in a separate section.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.