Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of multimorbidity in the elderly population: results of a study based on electronic medical records

Version: 3 Date: 20 November 2013

Reviewer: Ingmar Schafer

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well written and interesting paper that describes the associations of multimorbidity patterns with each other and with patient characteristics. The patterns had been identified in a paper that already had been published elsewhere. I will give my comments as I go through the text.

Major Compulsory Revisions

p.4 Methods/Design: Please state the total number of primary care centers in your data set and the number of centers that have been excluded due to exclusion criteria.

p.7 Results: You describe that the prevalence of the CM pattern is similar for males and females, but I find this interpretation rather subjective as 21.2% vs. 17.3% means that 22.5% more males than females suffer from this pattern. Maybe you could test for statistical significance and report its results? I would also suggest that you report the mean number of CM diagnoses you found in males and females. Both information would help to sharpen interpretation regarding these gender differences.

p.10 Discussion: You mention that gender differences in CM have been reported in other studies. How do you explain that you did not find these differences yourselves?

p.10 Discussion/Strengths and limitations: Exclusion of health centers based on documentation quality could have introduced bias if centers with high patient traffic and/or more patients with worse health conditions and/or more patients from deprived areas also have worse documentation quality, e.g. due to higher workload. This should be discussed.

p.10 Discussion/Strengths and limitations: The study is limited to large cities and does not cover rural areas. This also should be discussed.

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