Reviewer's report

Title: Timing of preemptive vascular access placement: do we understand the natural history of advanced CKD?: an observational study

Version: 2 Date: 25 April 2013

Reviewer: swapnil hiremath

Reviewer's report:

The revisions address most of the comments raised in an acceptable way.

Discretionary revision:

There is a paragraph in the middle of the discussion which states: "Unfortunately, it does not appear likely that the currently best available prediction equation regarding risk of ESRD will be directly helpful in guiding clinical decision making. While the Tangri equation has some discriminating power (i.e. assessed 2-year risk of ESRD to patients who did go on to receive hemodialysis within a year is higher than the assessed risk for those who did not), the absolute predicted risks are quite far from observed risks (the two groups in Table 3 have actual observed 1-year risks of 100% and 0%). This suboptimal calibration means that the equation cannot be introduced into clinical practice."

However, the authors have not, in their present study, attempted to validate the risk equation in a group of patients with CKD - they have attempted to validate the equation in a group of patients who had a vascular access created. As pointed out before, none of these patients died. Thus these patient population is a highly selected group of patients, chosen by nephrologists for their higher probability of both, not dying and of needing dialysis. Notwithstanding that nephrologists are not perfect at doing this selection, this group is still a selected population and does not represent all CKD stage 4/5 patients. Hence, statements about 'suboptimal calibration' are not justified. Additionally, calibration has a certain meaning in the prediction model world, which has not been performed in this report.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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