Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of prior CKD management in a renal care network on early outcomes in incident dialysis patients: a prospective observational study

Version: 2 Date: 1 October 2012

Reviewer: Adeera Levin

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:

While appreciating that the network has been described elsewhere, some high level overview of the key components of the network would be important. Are there standardized protocols, for visits, testing and standardized education tools? Is there a focus on CV disease for these patients, that is standardized. Knowing some of these aspects will help the reader contextualize the findings.

Please make clearer the rationale for selecting only those who started dialysis? If the slope was slower in network pts and yet all started dialysis within the month, then as the authors suggest, this means that those in the network started at higher eGFR. Please comment on how this might skew the results, especially in light of the IDEAL trial. Did the control patients start more acutely? Did network pts have more AVF than control patients.

These are all important things to point out to bolster the argument for the network.

If the high quality care occurred in control group (page 12) then what it is that the network offers that is different... This would be of interest to the readers.

In the limitations section please also include that you only reported on pts who started dialysis. If you look at matched pts who do not start dialysis, and have similar length of exposure to "network" vs "control" care, would the results be the same?

Reduction in hospitalizations becomes the major outcome which is laudable. The wording of the conclusions is still slightly awkward. Please fix.

Minor revisions:

There are still some grammatical errors (cares instead of care, in introduction, page 10: "exposition" to MDRC, really should be "exposure"

Please review the context of the study within the French health care system.

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