Reviewer’s report

Title: How are patients managing with the costs of care for chronic kidney disease in Australia? A prospective observational study

Version: 2 Date: 3 October 2012

Reviewer: Louisa Gordon

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory
1. Labeling the study ‘prospective’ is true in the sense of participant recruitment but the data itself is captured retrospectively so I am not sure it is entirely accurate to say it is a prospective study. The descriptor ‘cross sectional’ is perhaps better.
2. Abstract – the p values are not necessary when the 95% CIs are presented – usually present one or the other.
3. Abstract – the results could be clearer because currently all factors influencing hardship are lumped together. It would be clearer if the protective factors were separated from the negative factors.
4. There are some typos in the manuscript that should be corrected. E.g. introduction, 2nd line, p9 starting a sentence with ‘19%’ is incorrect - should be in full text.
5. Can the authors provide a rationale for the recall period of ‘previous quarter’? Does this adequately capture most costs that would accrue? This time period needs to be included in the graph titles.
7. Analyses – I think it would be interesting if another sub-group was those participants with comorbidities (e.g. <3 vs >=3). This could shed light on the impact of concurrent conditions and these costs for patients particularly diabetes, known to have high out-of-pocket costs.
8. Discussion – page 12, top paragraph lists the results of the financial hardship questions for the first time. I think this belongs in the results section.
9. Discussion – the authors state on p13 that a prospective design with measurements taken over time will inform change in financial circumstances etc. But the patients are already, on average, 5 years past their dialysis and 12 years past their diagnosis – so these costs may already reflect the situation of the established ‘steady state’ or perhaps best case – those not working by now may
never do so? The authors may wish to comment along these lines.

Minor essential
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Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests