Reviewer's report

**Title:** Impact of a modified claims ascertainment period on Liu comorbidity index scores in chronic dialysis initiates

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 19 January 2013

**Reviewer:** Bengt Lindholm

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors propose and evaluate a modified version of a comorbidity index previously proposed by Liu et al by changing the baseline comorbidity capture period to days 1-90 after dialysis initiation for persons continuously enrolled in Medicare. The authors conclude that this captures the majority of comorbidity, reduces sample size losses, and facilitates inclusion of a sicker portion of the population in whom early mortality is common. The question posed by the authors is well-defined, methods appear to be appropriate and well described, data reported are relevant and seem, and the discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported by the data. Limitations of the work are clearly stated and the authors acknowledge previous work on this topic. The title however needs to be revised. The abstract conveys what has been found but the conclusions should mention that this applies to Medicare data. The manuscript is well written.

Minor Essential Revisions:
- The title should be changed. It is necessary to state that this is about Medicare data. Also please change the technical term "claims ascertainment period" to something more understandable for the not so well informed reader.
- The abstract conclusions should mention that this applies to Medicare data.

**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:**

Bengt Lindholm is employed by Baxter Healthcare