Reviewer's report

Title: Atrial Fibrillation in Chronic Dialysis Patients in the United States: Risk Factors for Hospitalization and Mortality.

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Reviewer: Prof Carmine Zoccali

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Other (see below)

Atrial fibrillation is more common in dialysis patients than in the general population but the implications of this alterations remain poorly defined. The analysis of a historical cohort of the USDRS by Abbot et al., is a novel, interesting and potentially important contribution on this important problem.

I have a few suggestions

1) The description of the USRDS DMMS Wave 2 cohort is not reported. The repository of this information is the WEB site of the USRDS. No details are given in the paper. However getting information on this cohort in the WEB site is rather laborious. I feel that it worth presenting (clearly and compactly) the inception cohort in the paper rather than purely referring to the WEB site. This is fundamental information that should be incorporated in the manuscript.

2) The association of drugs with mortality is difficult to interpret in an observational study. Perhaps the authors may use propensity scores to better define the value of Coumadin in dialysis patients with AF. The favourable effect of Coumadin is a credible and potentially important finding and it is important to analyse thoroughly data concerning this particular problem.

3) A parallel analysis on atrial fibrillation in ESRD based on the USRDS has also been undertaken by Herzog CA, Ma JZ and Collins A (JASN 13: 433A, 2002). The authors may also quote and discuss this paper based on the same DataBase.

Competing interests:

None declared.