Reviewer’s report

Title: Changes in perceived well-being of patients one year after stroke in general practice - Recommendations for quality aftercare

Version: 2 Date: 31 August 2010

Reviewer: Ashma Krishan

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In the statistical analysis section in the second paragraph, it is not very clear why correction for ‘multiple testing’ is not carried out. Also p-values are not “an indication of the magnitude of the difference that was found.” Instead ‘p-values are an indication of the strength of the evidence’. Hence, a p-value of 0.001 is highly significant and shows that there is strong evidence, a p-value of 0.055 is borderline significant and shows that there is moderate evidence and a p-value of 0.45 is not statistically significant and shows that the evidence is rather weak. Thus, it seems that the interpretation of the p-values needs to be adjusted in many cases.

2. It seems there is a significant amount of missing data in Table 1, such as only reports number of patients living alone, in the type of stroke category it only adds up to 93%, and for brain hemisphere it again only adds up to 91%. It would help if the missing data was reported and categorised in some way.

3. It seems for Table 2 non-parametric methods have been used. It is very unclear why the mean barthel index value is reported then. In the first instance the normality assumption should be mentioned in the methods section and if the assumption is not valid then the median and range should be reported rather than the mean value.

4. For Tables 3 and 5 it is unclear what ‘Change in Health’ is and where is comes from. There is no mention of it in the methods chapter. This needs to be either defined and mentioned in the methods chapter or removed from the analysis.

5. In the results chapter in the section on ‘Mood disorder’ in the last paragraph, it says that correlations could not be found for the given variables. However, it is not very clear what is meant by could not be found-were the correlation values equal to zero or were they very close to zero.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the statistical analysis section in the first paragraph, it says that one of the methods used is a t-test. It should be made much clearer whether it was a one-sample t-test or a 2-sample t-test.

2. In the results chapter in the section on ‘Functioning’ in the first paragraph, it
says “There is no difference between men and women.” This sentence should be re-phrased and correctly written as either 'There is no significant difference between men and women' or ‘There is no evidence of a significant difference between men and women’, whichever is preferred. This should be the case for all of the interpretations.

3. In the results chapter in the section on ‘Functioning’ in the second paragraph, the p-value for housekeeping is written as $p=0.000$ however, it should be changed to $p<0.001$. This should be the case for all p-values written as $p=0.000$.

4. In the results chapter in the section on ‘Daily occupations’ in the third paragraph, it says “A lot of patients have trouble keeping their hobbies.” However, from Table 2 it seems that about 62% do as much as before their stroke. There seems to be a huge disagreement between the two results.

5. The title for Table 4 seems to be slightly misleading. Slight unsure as to what is meant by “statistical significant results of the independent-samples T-test or one-way ANOVA”. A t-test is not carried out for the results in that table. Also, Table 4 reports non-significant and significant results.

Discretionary Revisions

NONE.

Minor issues not for publication

1. In the abstract in the results section, it says “ADL independency is correlating to a better quality of life.” It may be a better idea to say ‘ADL independency is correlated with a better quality of life.’

2. In the statistical analysis section in the first paragraph, it seems the last sentence should read ‘…on the BI and HRQOL we used…’.

3. In the results chapter in the second paragraph, it may be a better idea to say “The detailed baseline characteristics…”.

4. In the results chapter in the section on ‘Caregiver Strain’ in the third paragraph, it says “…between age, functioning or HRQOL of stroke…”. It seems the sentence should read ‘…between age, functioning and HRQOL of stroke…’.

5. In the results chapter in the section on ‘Caregiver Strain’ in the third paragraph, it says “There is a moderate correlation for caregiver…”. The sentence should read ‘There is a moderate and negative correlation for…’.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published
Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.