Reviewer's report

Title: Life satisfaction two-years after stroke onset: a study in Luxembourg of the effects of sex, occupational status, memory function and quality of life among stroke survivors (Newsqol) and their family caregivers (Whoqol-bref).

Version: 2 Date: 24 March 2012

Reviewer: Halvor Naess

Reviewer's report:

This is a paper on life satisfaction and quality of life in stroke patients and caregivers. It is not an easy read and I have some major comments.

Major compulsory revisions

1. My first major concern is about the length of the paper. Both the abstract, background, methods, discussion and conclusion are far too long including too many details. It should be shortened by perhaps at least two thirds and it should focus on what is important in this particular study. There is for example too much speculation in the discussion. In stead the discussion should focus on the main findings in this study.

2. Life satisfaction is a simple measure. In spite of my concern about the length of the paper, I suggest that the authors explain the clinical meaning of this measure. How does it differ from measures on quality of life?

3. The objective of the study including hypotheses should be better stated in the background.

4. The main methodological short-coming of the study is the low response rate. This makes it difficult to make generalisations from this study as the patients may represent a highly selected group. This short-coming might be improved by better characterization of the patients. Data on stroke subtype, risk factor profile, and some common surrogate marker for stroke severity such as modified Rankin scale, Barthel Index or NIHSS stroke scale should have been included.

5. Another weakness is the relatively low number of patients.

6. Table 3 is perhaps the most interesting part of the study. However, it is difficult to read as I am not familiar with the statistical method applied. Was a statistician consulted? I am confused about the way patients and caregivers are included in the table. I recommend that you clearly structure the table in such a way that it is easy to understand when caregivers are included or not in the (I suppose) different models.

7. The conclusion should be shortened and focus on the main finding of the study.

8. In the abstract it is stated that LS is 7.1 patients on a scale from 1 to 10, but +12.8 for women. I realize this is a separate measure, but this is impossible to understand from the abstract alone.
Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests