Reviewer's report

Title: Barriers to sight impairment certification in the UK: The example of a diabetic population in East London

Version: 2 Date: 13 March 2014

Reviewer: Irene M Stratton

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This is an important question and I am not aware that it has been covered elsewhere.

The data appear to be sound.

The interpretation is good and the methods appropriate.

The methods are appropriate and could be followed by others. The methods could not be improved upon given the problems with NHS data sources.

Minor essential revisions -
1) Figure 2 is unreadable and appears to have no axes labels.

2) Reference 1 has been superseded by a later paper and diabetic eye disease is now 2nd reason for blindness as assessed by certification.

Discretionary revisions

1) Title – “people with diabetes” rather than “diabetic population”.

2) Third paragraph of introduction, might include that it’s in PHOF.

3) Methods section

Might be helpful to say that patients attended for screening or in clinics.

4) Results

Line 4, ‘died’ rather than ‘deceased’ (occurs later too).

5) Percentages have at least one too many decimal places, with fewer than 100 patients I would tend to go for whole numbers of percentages, maybe 1 place but not 2.

6) Para 3, maybe in the last line remove the word ‘fail’ – “did not attend” might be preferred. Certainly when I’ve looked at data there’s very often extremely good reasons for non-attendance Also ‘invitations’ rather than ‘opportunities’.

7) In para 4, was it clear whether diabetes patients had lost vision due to retinopathy or due to diabetic maculopathy?

8) Para 5, ‘living’ rather than ‘alive’.
9) It might be helpful to have some idea about the demographics of these patients (age, gender, ethnicity).

10) A discussion point might be around whether it might be helpful for a similar audit to be carried out in another area.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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:

I declare that I have no competing interests.