Reviewer's report

Title: Co-morbidity and health care utilisation five years prior to diagnosis for depression A register-based study in a Swedish population

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Reviewer: L Hakkaart-van Roijen

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors randomly selected control. The controls differ significantly for gender, age and SE status. However, they do not correct for these differences in the analyses. Why did the authors did not match the control with the selected depressed patients?

Co-morbidity was based on the ACGs. The application of this methodology needs further notification.

The selection excluded patients with related diagnoses. However, the validity of the diagnoses is a serious weakness. The authors should quantify the impact of this bias.

The authors fail present the costs per patient for the five year-period. Besides, we do not get an overview of the percentage of cost per main medical health service.

Furthermore, there seems a contradiction with in the discussion. The last section of the result paragraph presents that the average cost per patient were respectively 25600 SEK and 13400 SEK. At the beginning of the discussion section these figures seems to refer to the whole 5-year period.

The figures need some improvement

The authors mention that study indicated that psychiatric diagnoses have been found to be underrespoited, especially in prim care. Patients often present themself with somatic complaints instead of a depression. Hence, drug use might be a predictor of a future depression diagnosis. It would be of value if the author would assess this hypothesis.

The paper would improve if the authors should extend the discussion with the meaning of the result for health care policy.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests