Reviewer's report

Title: Psychometric evaluation of the German Version of the Patient Activation Measure (PAM13)

Version: 1 Date: 27 August 2013

Reviewer: Jany Rademakers

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Generally yes. For some readers, given the psychometric nature of the manuscript it might be difficult to understand. I would have preferred the authors to have used the same answer categories as in the other versions of the PAM. Comparability might be hampered by their choice to omit the N/A option from 12 items. This is something which has to be addressed in the strengths and limitations section.

3. Are the data sound?
   Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Below there are some suggestions to improve the discussion and conclusions. At some points in the discussion, authors are very detailed or introduce subgroups which have not been described in the results section.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Not enough (see 2. and below)

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

Minor essential revisions:
Abstract: Definition Patient Activation Measure: .... regarding one’s health concerns? I have never read this version before. Please use the term used by Hibbard et al.

Page 3:
‘A more active involvement....[5,6]’ There is a difference between the concepts patient involvement and self-management. In the introduction, they are used loosely intertwined, as if they are synonyms (or involvement as pre-requisite for self-management). They represent different aspects of an increased role for patients in the health care process. Patient involvement is not defined at this point (it can be either broad or narrowly defined), whereas a definition of self-management follows later in the introduction.

Page 5:
The English version is also translated in Norwegian:
Steinsbekk A: Måling av effect av pasientoplæring [Norwegian version of Patient Activation Measure (PAM)]. Tidsskr Nor Legeforen 2008, 128: 2316-8. This should also be noted in the discussion and conclusions.

Furthermore, according to Judith Hibbard there is also a Spanish version (for Hispanics) but there is no journal article about that.

Page 6, under Measures:
Authors do not have to add that a specific item was in German. Since it is a translated questionnaire, it goes without saying.

The fact that the N/A option was left out with 12 items (because it was better understandable?) make the data derived from it less comparable to the other versions of the PAM, which is a pity. This should be described in the discussion section and considered a limitation of this study and of the future instrument for international research.

Page 8:
Response rate was low (bruto response 47.5%). How do authors explain this (how were the data acquired: online or by paper and pencil questionnaire)? Is there information about the non-responders? Why is this not mentioned as a limitation of the study (because especially non-responders could be the ones’ with lower PAM scores).

Page 11:
Discussion
1st sentence ‘older’ with respect to what? Relatively old?

Page 12/13:
‘When testing for DIF....negligible’. This paragraph is very much in detail and
discusses differences on item level. If they are relevant: please describe them in the results section and discuss the differences here on a more general level.

Page 13:
Comparing subgroups… Here differences with respect to diagnosis subgroups are introduced, and patients with depression and anxiety are mentioned. These differences have not been described in the text of the results section. Please do.

Page 14:
Implications: the reference to the work interventions (reference 32) is out of context in this article which focuses on older people with multi-morbidity and their competences for self-management. Later in the same paragraph, the reference to other samples makes more sense.

The sentence ‘Therefore, the PAM can be a useful instrument’ should be: ‘To that end, the PAM….’.

I do not know what authors mean by ‘Studies testing the responsiveness of the PAM 13…’ Do they mean intervention studies? That would be correct. But other studies testing the instrument, its concurrent validity with e.g. health literacy and correlations with different outcome measures are being done and ongoing in the Netherlands (see references).

References:
• Heijmans, M., Rijken, M., Nijman, J., Rademakers, J.. Patient activation among chronic disease patients and implications for self-management support needs. (submitted)

Page 15:
Acknowledgements. Did the authors have a license to use the PAM 13 in this study? Should they not mention the license holder (Indsignia Health) in the acknowledgements?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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