Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence of multimorbidity of chronic diseases in Australia

Version: 1 Date: 31 January 2008

Reviewer: Martin Fortin

Reviewer's report:

I have read this paper with great interest. The paper is well supported by appropriate references. In my opinion, it is not ready for publication and it will need some rewriting.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Multimorbidity vs comorbidity. The authors acknowledge the difference between these two concepts but seem to ignore them throughout the paper. Multimorbidity is defined as the presence of two or more chronic diseases or conditions in the same patient. Prevalence is reported as the percentage of patients suffering from two or more conditions... Other cut off may be used as 3 or more, for or more and so on.

Comorbidity was originally described as any other condition occurring at the same time with an index condition. (van den Akker, M., F. Buntinx, and J.A. Knottnerus, Comorbidity or multimorbidity: what's in a name? A review of literature. The European Journal of General Practice, 1996. 2: p. 65-70.


This paper is on comorbidity. So the title is misleading as there are no prevalence data for multimorbidity in this paper. The paper would benefit from the clarification of the two concepts in the background section. The author should also pay attention to the use of the two terms throughout the paper. This also implies a rewriting of the objective.

2) This review is presented as a systematic review but the authors did not report on the quality of the articles they have selected for this review. I would have expected this appraisal to be done and reported.

3) The results section: In my opinion there is too much overlap between the reporting of the results and the tables. It is preferable not to duplicate the information. It would be preferable just to underline the results that are more impressive or on which the authors want to draw attention.

4) A section or a paragraph on the limitations of this review is expected.

Minor Revisions:

5) Page 8 Cancer. Remove (table 3) at the end of the paragraph.
Discretionary Revisions:
Not applicable at this stage

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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 interest