Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of clinical pathway on clinical outcomes in the management of COPD exacerbation

Version: 3 Date: 27 May 2012

Reviewer: Kris Vanhaecht

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2. History effect
Answer – page 4
The retrospective group of patients in this study did not differ in terms of medication usage. We collected data only from one year prior to this study. This was to ensure that the drugs available for treatment of COPD were the same in the two groups. We also took into account the pulmonary rehabilitation programme in our centre which was launched 3 years ago.

==> no specific organizational changes, teams changes, other.. happened within that year? => effect could be due to these changes instead of care pathway => would it be possible that hereby wrong conclusions are made?

Next to this point it stays unclear if the team performed a clinical audit prior to the development of the pathway. Did the team evaluate the organization of the care process and based on this audit, develop the pathway, or was the pathway only based on the available guidelines?

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'