Author's response to reviews

Title: Treatment in the Rotterdam Early Arthritis Cohort (tREACH): a randomized controlled trial of early intervention guided by a prediction model in patients with recent onset arthritis

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Version: 3 Date: 30 March 2009

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

Please, find enclosed our revised manuscript entitled ‘Treatment in the Rotterdam Early Arthritis Cohort (tREACH): a randomized controlled trial of early intervention guided by a prediction model in patients with recent onset arthritis’.

Based on the feedback given by the reviewer we rewrote the article by;

1. clarifying the difference about REACH and tREACH
2. editing the paper with help of an colleague who has lots of expertise in English ‘scientific’ writing

Another comment of the reviewer was about cost effectiveness. The reviewer noted that it was not clear that data on cost effectiveness will be analyzed at the level of the individual patient. By rewriting the paragraphs on study design and cost effectiveness we tried to make it clear that the issue which strategy gives best results for which patient will be answered by this study. Moreover we documented in the Methods paragraph that we will obtain written informed consent from the study participants.

Finally this resulted in the present shorter, clear manuscript with the main message that risk stratification using a prediction rule is possible easing the treatment decision for rheumatologists.

We would like to ask you to reconsider this paper as a concise report to contribute to discussion about whom to treat with DMARDs early when a patient is diagnosed with arthritis as discussed by Combe et al in 2007 (AnnRheumDis 66(1):34-45). It fits also in the scope of the current discussions about criteria for early Rheumatoid Arthritis.

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Yours sincerely,
Angelique Weel on behalf of Prof. Mieke Hazes and the co-authors