Reviewer's report

Title: The Rheumatoid Arthritis Treat-To-Target Trial: A Cluster Randomized Trial Within the Corrona Rheumatology Network

Version: 2
Date: 30 July 2014

Reviewer: Burkhard Leeb

Reviewer's report:

1. Will the study design adequately test the hypothesis?
I'm really not sure, because the authors explicitly state that their interest is far more the level of the treating physician than the patient, given their randomization process. However, I'm not sure whether it is of importance that the physician feels well with the treatment instead of the patient. This reflects the predominantly paternalistic approach of the T2T initiative, which ultimately claims that the physicians knows better than the patients how the patient feels. Rheumatoid Arthritis treatment is far more than achieving a number. This is also particularly expressed by the choice of an 28 joint count containing composite index, which does not really meet the needs of daily practice.

So the authors should explicitly explain which advantages may be derived from the knowledge whether physicians keep to the T2T approach?

And, what is an instrument good for in daily routine if one third of the patients are misleadingly assessed?

I would be very much in favor of such an investigation if PROs, and thereby the patients, are applied as decisive measures.

2. Are sufficient details provided to allow replication of the work or comparison with related analyses: if not, what is missing? Yes

3. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition: if not, in what ways? Yes

4. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

In reviewing the revised manuscript, please consider whether the authors have answered your points sufficiently well to allow their manuscript to be published. As before, we would like you to divide your comments into the following three categories:

- Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)