Reviewer’s report

Title: Pain medication management of musculoskeletal conditions at first presentation in primary care: analysis of routinely collected medical record data

Version: 2  Date: 22 October 2014

Reviewer: Rafael Pinto

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This is an observational study investigating the type of analgesics prescribed by primary care clinicians. The authors found that nearly half of the patients presenting with a new episode of a musculoskeletal condition receive prescribed pain medication. NSAIDs were prescribed more often than simple analgesics. However, when analysis was conducted to specific region of pain, Strong analgesics were quite popular for those suffering with back pain. The study is well written and provides useful information to clinicians, researchers and government.

Minor comments

Methods –

Page 5: Please clarify whether this was a prospective or retrospective study.

Page 6- Line 116: I would strongly recommend the authors to include a better explanation about the hierarchical analgesic categorisation presented by Bedson and colleagues (reference 11). This hierarchical analgesic categorization is essential for readers to understand and interpret the results of this paper. Please consider asking European Journal of Pain to use the same flowchart. May be possible to use the copyrighted material.

Results- Page 10 and 11: I would suggest to keep ‘95% CI’ before authors report CI in the results section.

Discussion- Line 316-326: I think it is worth mentioning that primary care physicians are not following back pain guidelines when prescribing analgesics to patients presenting with a new episode of back pain.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
none