Reviewer's report

Title: Prescribing patterns of glucosamine in an elderly population: A national cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 26 March 2013

Reviewer: Vincent Chung

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revision

1. A negative binomial regression model was used to determine trends in prescribing rates, but quantitative results were not reported.
2. 95% CI should be reported in figure 1.
3. The current discussion is mostly unrelated to the findings. Observations below should be elaborated:

3.1. Prescription for female > 75 seems to reach plateau instead of going down despite the government’s announcement that it is not cost effective. Please highlight this in the discussion.

3.2. After the NICE guideline, a 2nd guideline discouraging its use is being published:


o Need to explain why there is a lag between evidence availability / policy action – and why clinicians are not responding to repeated guideline changes

4. Women are more likely to get prescription – in general female prefer complementary medicine in both western (Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine Volume 7 (2010), Issue 1, Pages 11-28) and eastern (Health Expect. 2012 May 31. doi: 10.1111/j.1369-7625.2012.00794.x) countries.

5. Complimentary alternative medicines (CAM) – proper term needed – usually “complementary”

6. “In the primary care setting, GPs, pharmacists and physiotherapists represent the most frequent health professional that patients engage with for musculoskeletal conditions, including OA. “ – not necessarily true, in some other populations pharmacy sales and media play a stronger role and healthcare professionals may need to compete with them and promote the “right” messages (European Journal of Integrative Medicine. 3(4), e289–e298.)

7. In the conclusion, the author stated that there is “little evidence to support the
cost effectiveness of glucosamine for the treatment of OA.” = Please remove this as this is not a cost effectiveness study

8. There is no point talking about further research in glucosamine as this study do not aim to critique problems in existing trials. Please focus discussion on why doctors do not follow guideline – consider how the prescription decision is affected by changing financial policy, evidence, patients' choice and professions' position.

Minor issue
Page 14
Received – spelling error

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests