Reviewer’s report

Title: Symptom recognition and health care seeking among immigrants and native Swedish patients with heart failure

Version: 1 Date: 23 December 2007

Reviewer: Birgit Reime

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

This is a well written and important study. The aim was to explore and compare symptom recognition and health care seeking patterns among immigrants and native Swedes with HF. The results show that the reasons for treatment seeking largely overlapped while immigrants reported less awareness regarding the meaning of the symptoms.

More information on the national background and the time the immigrants have spent in the country would be very useful for the understanding of the results.

I do not understand how “communication between hospital health providers and those in primary care may be inadequate, leading to discontinuity in the care process” (page 7) is related to poor knowledge or symptom recognition and response among immigrants and “native” Swedish people.

“primary care HF clinics organised as “drop-in” clinics” (page 7) should be further explained to readers from outside Sweden, if possible with a reference.

“For example, minority groups were more likely to have had contact with general practitioners but not with specialist physicians and were less likely to have been admitted to hospital [28].” The literature on this topic is controversial and largely depends on the particular setting where the study took place. The reference the authors provide is based on Canadian data, however, the profile of Swedish immigrant groups may not be readily comparable with the Canadian setting. Therefore, please either provide more references that reflect the variety of results on this issue or restrict the references to the Swedish setting.

In table 2, frequencies of alcohol abuse are presented although the authors have defined alcohol abuse as an exclusion criterion on page 5.

In table 2, data on the level of significance (p-value) are not presented although according to page 6, 1st para, the authors must have conducted statistical tests.

I have to admit, not being a qualitative researcher myself, I cannot comment on
the adequacy of the data analysis.

Minor Essential Revisions

On page 6, 3rd para, the table 2 is referred to when table 3 is meant.
Page 7, 3rd line, ‘among’ is missing.

Discretionary Revisions
None.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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.