Reviewer's report

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

**Version:** 1  Date: 24 December 2007

**Reviewer:** Judith Finn

**Reviewer's report:**

This paper reports the results of interviews with n=21 'immigrants' and n=21 'native Swedish' patients with heart failure, with the aim of exploring cultural differences in 'symptom recognition and treatment seeking behaviour'. Overall the paper is an interesting read and highlights the importance of considering cultural and language issues in the ongoing management of patients with chronic diseases such as heart failure.

I have several suggestions for revision that fall into the minor essential revision categories.

1. The rationale for the sample size of 42 is not stated in the Methods

2. Language/Expression

   **Abstract and Introduction:** the word "premises" may be confusing - I would suggest "patient perceptions/belief".

   **Abstract:** "what the experienced illness entailed" - suggest rewording to "what the illness experience entailed"

   **Abstract:** "Tailored pedagogical interventions" - suggest replacing the word "pedagogical" with "educational" (Less pompous language)

   **Introduction - paragraph 1:** " Furthermore, confusion over symptom recognition is a recurrent problem" needs more explanation / contextualisation.

   **Introduction - paragraph 2 last sentence:** "sensations" - suggest replacing with "symptoms"

3. Tables

   **Table 2:** The sub-columns should all add to 21 - but they don't.

   **Under Marital Status - the Immigrants column only adds to 20 and the Swedes column adds to 22.**

   **The Risk Factors - I assume that there are 14 immigrants who are ex-smokers and 2 Swedes? I would suggest addign in this group to make the table more**
understandable.
How was 'Alcohol abuse' defined?
Table 3: How does "Breathing difficulties" differ from "Abnormal breathing"?

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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'