Reviewer’s report

Title: Methods to Identify the Target Population: Implications for Prescribing Indicators

Version: 2 Date: 22 March 2010

Reviewer: Morten Andersen

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

None.

- Minor Essential Revisions

1. The first aim of the paper is to assess if "the chosen approach affect the score of individual PQI". The authors state on page 7 that prescribing scores observed with different approaches were nearly identical (Table 3). I understand that these are population-level scores (as opposed to an average of practice-level values). This should be made explicit.

2. Data analysis. The ICPC-codes for IHD and MI diagnoses used in addition to hypertension (PQI-2) should also be specified.

3. Data analysis section and Table 3. CIs of population-level indicator scores should be adjusted for clustering (intra-practice correlation).

4. In Table 4, the PQI-1 and PQI-3 descriptive titles have been interchanged and should be corrected.

- Discretionary Revisions

5. The authors have chosen SBP >=140 to define hypertension with a clinical measurement. In diabetes patients, the target BP is <130/<80 (2003 WHO/ISH statement on management of hypertension, J Hypertens 2003;21:1983-92). If there a particular reason for choosing a higher SBP level in their population of T2DM patients, the authors should comment on this.

6. Lowering the diagnostic SBP level for hypertension in T2DM to >=130 would probably increase the difference between diagnosis-based and clinical measurement based results further. This could be added to the discussion.

7. These PQIs appear suitable for screening individual patients for under-treatment and for measuring quality at the population level. Given the small number of patients per practice, they may not be sufficiently precise to measure and compare quality at the practice level. The authors could consider commenting this.
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests