Reviewer's report

Title: Improvement of primary care for patients with chronic heart failure: a pilot study.

Version: 1 Date: 20 August 2009

Reviewer: Josiane JJ JJ Boyne

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The subject of this study is current and well chosen. It is a welcome contribution in the development of improving the quality of care for patients with heart failure in primary care. Nevertheless, some additions will improve the clarity of the intervention.

The title of the study and the abstract convey with what was found. The methods are well described, except some points (see minor revisions). Discussion and conclusion are well balanced and adequately supported by the data, the limitations of the study are clearly stated.

Minor essential revisions:
- The structured organization includes regularly planned contacts. How often were these contacts planned and how often were they performed?
- One of the roles of the visitor was to check if practices were able to select appropriate patients. What were the selection criteria?
- Throughout the period a GP with specific knowledge of treatment of CHF was available. Is this GP consulted during this period, and if (s)he is, how often and for which reasons did this occur?
- One of the goals is changes in drug treatment and medication changes. This study reports (only) the new prescribed medication. How about the scheduled titration of medication according the multidisciplinary guidelines, and how about adjustments in medication as result of patients complaints? Did they occur, and if they did, how often and by who were they managed: by the GP, the nurse or the assistant?
- The information about smoking in the text and table doesn't match. The text reports that 6 of the registered smokers were (again) advised to stop smoking. The table shows 6 advised smokers at baseline and 4 smokers were advised again.

Spelling mistakes:
Abstract/methods: line 2. An observational study was done in ........and 77 CHF patients in the study. Remove: in the study.

Introduction:
Results/sample:

Discussion/interpretation:
line 33: ...do not go to the outdoor clinic. Remove: outdoor or Change in: outdoor or outpatient

Discretionary revisions:
- A trained practice visitor visited all practices: to which discipline belongs the visitor?
- Some practices were offered three extra visits. What was the cause for this extra contacts, and by who were they induced: by the practice or by the visitor?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.