Reviewer's report

Title: What causes treatment failure - the patient, primary care, secondary care or inadequate interaction in the health services?

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Reviewer: Peter Malfertheiner

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The authors performed a follow-up study to assess the causes of treatment failure in patients suffering from gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Patients with moderate or severe symptoms were included in the study and had a semi-structured interview which evaluated the reasons for treatment failure from the patient side of view.

The interviews were analyzed by physicians from different specialties and different parts of health service (gastroenterologists, surgeons, general practice). Interestingly, the main reason for treatment failure was failing interaction between the health services. The interdisciplinary agreement between the physicians was satisfactory.

These findings are of general interest, especially because treatment failure represents a high burden for health care services all over the world.

Even if the number of patients included in the study is very low, the manuscript is of clinical relevance and publishable in your journal after minor revisions. The presentation of the data leaves some questions:

Specific comments:

1. The diagnosis of GERD was based on typical symptoms and endoscopic findings. Did the authors have any chance to perform a specific questionnaire (like the GERD Q-questionnaire) to better evaluate the symptoms and reasons for treatment failure in this study.

2. There is no control group in the study. This is a follow-up study. Some patients were excluded for this study from the original study due to different reasons, like irritable bowel syndrome. It would be very interesting, if the authors could find a suitable control-group from the original study to strengthen their results.

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.