Reviewer's report

**Title:** Development and feasibility of a set of quality indicators relative to the timeliness and organisation of breast cancer care

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 28 February 2012

**Reviewer:** Geertruida De Bock

**Reviewer's report:**

This is an interesting topic and study. It is well written and easy to read. My main point concerns the (lack of) discussion, which makes it far more interesting for a larger groups of readers.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
I would prefer to add the patient category to the study question, i.e. “new patients with infiltrating, non-inflammatory and metastasis-free breast cancer undergoing surgery within the institution”, because this is an important focus in this question.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
I miss the number of French hospitals that were approached in this study and an estimate of the number of non-responding hospitals.
The main aim of this study is to assess the validity of the eight proposed QIs. As the authors define, validity is that the QI really measured what it was intended to measure both from qualitative and quantitative points of view. The measure for validity is concordance, suggesting the authors limit validity to internal validity. Given the study question, I would expect an indication of the external validity.

3. Are the data sound?
The mean and SD in table 2 are difficult to understand. What is a mean score%? What is the unit? E.g. days?? The number of hospitals included esp. for Q3 and Q4 is rather low. What does that mean for the indicator?

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Satisfactory

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
I miss a discussion of the content of these QIs in relation to European QIs.
1. What are the topics of QI in other countries and how does these topics related to the here presented QIs. This can be done for the NICE guidelines but also for EUSOMA guidelines.
2. In a second part of the discussion the contents of the different QIs can be compared and discussed. In the Netherlands there are cut-offs for waiting times. When these are applied here, what can be concluded? Are the results from France different? The same can be done regarding the EUSOMA guidelines. Maybe it can be mentioned how much hospitals can could serve as a EUSOMA qualified hospital based on their scores.

I miss a discussion on the number of hospitals that could not be included in the analysis due to low numbers of completed grids / patients.

Further, what are / should be the implications for the hospitals of their own results?

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
I miss a mentioning of the patient group. I miss the European context.

9. Is the writing acceptable?
yes

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

**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' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.