Reviewer's report

Title: Vascular staging for diabetes: a useful instrument for severity adjustment in economic modeling

Version: 1 Date: 30 December 2011

Reviewer: Carlo Bruno

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting evaluation of a simplified method of assessing diabetes complication stage which also appears to be a good predictor of worse prognosis and increased cost.

No original new data is reported. The main limitations of the cohort is the ethnic (aboriginal) population which may preclude the generalization of the results to the general population.

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Methods II paragraph

“Serum creatinine was replaced with ACR a more sensitive measure of early renal disease.” This is not correct. Creatinine can not be replaced with and ACR. They are 2 quite different measures. Creatinine (and eGFR) is a measure of function (renal insufficiency), albuminuria is a marker of endothelial (glomerular) damage. The authors are invited to say that ACR was chosen because it is an early sign of diabetic nefropathy, not of renal function.

2. Results III paragraph

There is a clear correlation between the degree of vascular stage (complications) and death and cost. This is a well-known piece of information and these should be presented as confirmatory results. Authors should better comment that the main value of these paper is the instrument they propose (vascular stage).

3. The main limitations of the paper - ethnic (aboriginal) population, which may preclude the generalization of the results to the general population and very young and small cohort -should be better commented in the discussion.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests