Reviewer's report

Title: A Systematic Review of Economic Evaluations of Cardiac Rehabilitation

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Reviewer: Rod Taylor

Reviewer's report:

This study presents a systematic review on the economic evaluation literature for cardiac rehabilitation. It updates a previous systematic review published in 2005. It's particular value is that identifies some new studies that focused on the cost-effectiveness of different modes of cardiac rehabilitation.

Although the review has technically well conducted, this paper has a number of major issues that require addressing:

1. Inclusion criteria: (1) the authors state in the methods that they will include economic evaluations but provide no details of what the scope of that inclusion specifically means. It is unclear if they have included cost only (cost minimisation or cost consequence studies); (2) a number of studies included are in general CHD populations and not acute MI; (3) some of the studies are entirely based on educational interventions and not exercise-based.

2. Mixed mode of delivery: a number of the studies included comprises elements of both centre and home based provision - this needs to be dealt in the data presentation and discussion of findings that have been identified.

3. Presentation of results and discussions - the presentation of the results is rather mechanical and the discussion rather naive in terms of health economics language and thinking. Have the authors should involve a health economist and revisit these section.

4. Conclusion - the conclusion that home-based CR is more appealing will not be true for all patients and is not an evidenced based statement. The conclusions should be firmly grounded in the data reviewed. This data would suggest that the costs and outcomes of home vs centre based CR are similar and therefore choice should be left to purchasers and patients.

More minor issues

1. references in introduction first 3 paragraphs need updating - for example, an updated Cochrane review of effectiveness of exercise-based CR has been published (Heran et al, 2011)

2.

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 have undertaken a number economic evaluations of cardiac rehabilitation