Author's response to reviews

Title: Cost-effectiveness analysis of timely dialysis referral after renal transplant failure in Spain

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear editors:

Enclosed, you will find the manuscript “Cost-effectiveness analysis of timely dialysis referral after renal transplant failure in Spain”, for you to consider its publication as a “research article” in BMC Health Services Research.

This article constitutes the last piece of a series of three studies on the economic aspects of renal replacement therapy (RRT) in Spain. In the first study (Nephrol Dial Transplant 2011), we analyzed the costs of the Spanish RRT program. In the second study (Perit Dial Int 2011), we undertook a cost-effectiveness analysis of RRT in Spain, comparing the current situation with several hypothetical scenarios based on the proportion of programmed patients in dialysis. Finally, in this research, we extend the previous studies by performing a cost-effectiveness analysis of timely dialysis referral after renal transplant failure in Spain. This article adds to the previous ones, since a different and novel health economics problem is studied. Further, we now consider two new health states (late referral dialysis modalities), also quantifying their associated transition probabilities, health outcomes and costs.

Based on robust quantitative methods, the current Spanish situation was compared with an ideal scenario where all the patients undergoing graft function loss were referred back to dialysis in a timely manner. Timely dialysis referral after graft function loss proved to be an efficient alternative in Spain, improving both patients’ survival rates and health-related quality of life at an affordable cost. We believe this paper constitutes an up-to-date piece of work, providing data and results still unavailable in Spain. These results might be also useful to researchers from many other countries where this kind of research has not been conducted yet.

The results presented in this paper have not been published previously, in whole or part, except in abstract form. The authors, hereby, declare that they have no competing interests. Likewise, the authors would prefer neither to suggest nor to exclude any potential peer reviewers.

To conclude, by the present letter, I authorize the publication of the submitted version of this article in BMC Health Services Research.

Yours faithfully,

Guillermo Villa