Reviewer's report

Title: The effect of an active implementation of a disease management programme for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease on healthcare utilization - A cluster-randomised controlled trial

Version: 2 Date: 15 July 2013

Reviewer: Nicholas Zwar

Reviewer's report:

A lot of work has gone into this study and it is on a topic of interest so it is important for it to be published. The manuscript has improved substantially from the first iteration but there are still some problems

Major compulsory revisions

It can never be acceptable in a study described as a cluster randomised trial for some of the clusters randomised to be moved between groups for the analysis. The authors are now including the practices randomised to the active intervention group who declined to take part in the active intervention group for the intention to treat analysis. Even though these practices did not receive the intervention I do not think it is acceptable to ignore the randomisation and include their data in the control group for the as treated analysis. it would be better to exclude data from these practices for the as treated analysis.

The background section of the abstract is difficult to follow and needs to be rewritten to improve clarity.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

no competing declarations