Reviewer’s report

Title: What factors explain the amount of utilization of physical therapy care in patients referred with low back pain: a multi level analysis

Version: 1 Date: 3 June 2005

Reviewer: Alex Burdorf

Reviewer’s report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. the remark of health belief should be explained, probably the beliefs of the therapist is referred to (patients’ belief are very important and ‘wanted’ variation)
2. I miss some information on the Dutch system with regard to insurance (how many sessions are eligible for reimbursement and professional guidelines on number of sessions etc)
3. in the methods, all predictors are treated as fixed variables at the start whereas especially interventions may depend on progress in prognosis, is this a problem in the analysis?
4. the distribution of number of sessions is probably very skewed, is the analysis capable of handling this (I expect this to be a source of variation and one of the reasons for the low explained variance)
5. I would like to see a breakdown in interventions for number of sessions and range
6. the discussion on unexplained variance focuses on risk factors for LBP, but I fail to see how this could have an effect on the number of sessions. I expect also attention for methodological explanations for the low variation (see above)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. Table 5 could include the text info, since as it is right now it is difficult to understand.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests