Author's response to reviews

Title: Quality of care of patients with acute myocardial infarction in Bulgaria: a cross-sectional study

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To the Editorial Board – Health Services Research:

We thank you and the reviewers very much for your helpful comments and suggestions. We have now incorporated most of the recommendations. In the following, we will address (a) the main concerns you have summarized and (b) each of the further concerns.

Detailed suggestions of reviewer (Mr. Glickman):

(1) Section Methods: Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) asked about the approach used for comparing the accuracy of data collection. The inter-rater agreement between physician 1 and physician 2 was about 98%. Since the probability of chance agreement was very low, we considered the calculation of a kappa coefficient unnecessary.

(2) Section Methods: Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) recommended including the contraindications for fibrinolytic therapy. We accepted this recommendation and included the contraindications into the paragraph “specific contraindications for administered medication”.

(3) Page 9 – section Statistical analysis: Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) recommended testing the hypothesis on the relation between pre-hospital time delay only with the variables medical history, age, gender and treatment approach and to drop out LOS. We accepted the recommendation and changed the relevant sections accordingly.

(4) Page 11 - Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) asked for more information about the difference in pre-hospital time-delay between men and women with fibrinolysis. Because of the small number of women (four) we withdrew the sentence.

Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) also recommended including a table with the results of the statistical analysis concerning the relationship between pain-to-door time and patients’ socio-demographic characteristics. As we mentioned in section Results, paragraph Pre-hospital time delay, we could not include the patients with pain-to-door time > 24 hours because the exact time was missing in the
in-patients’ records. We did not include patients transferred from other hospitals as well. Thus, time delay data are only available for 74% of the study population. Therefore we refrained at first from presenting the figures from the statistical analysis. Notwithstanding our considerations we accepted the recommendation and included some of the figures in a new table (Table 4). We also added some comments in the section “Study Limitations” accordingly.

(5) Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) asked for additional information on acute MI treatment with ASS and #-Blockers. We accepted the suggestion and added additional information in text – in the new paragraph “In-hospital medical treatment during first 24 hours and at discharge” as well as in Table 5.

(6) Abstract – paragraph Results: Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) suggested indication of the time interval. We agreed with the suggestion and added an explanation.

(7) Page 18: Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) recommended a more careful expression of the findings regarding gender differences because of the small numbers. We accepted the recommendation and changed the sentence accordingly.

(8) Table 1: Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) recommended a correction in spelling. He also recommended spelling out the Bulgarian currency and giving the conversion values to US dollars and Euro. We accepted the recommendation and brought in the conversion values.

(9) Abstract – section Conclusions: Reviewer (Mr. Glickman) suggested including a positive comment to ending comment. We accepted the suggestion and changed the section accordingly.

We hope that our revision addressed all comments appropriately and look forward to your decision.

Sincerely,

Max Geraedts