Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 17 September 2008

Reviewer: Seth W. Glickman

Reviewer's report:

Overall this paper is much improved over the original draft. There are still some issues which need to be addressed:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. Methods - Data from inpatient records - Did you compare the results of the second physician's random 20% review to the first physician? How consistent/accurate was the data? Ideally, can you calculate a kappa coefficient? These are generally reported for retrospective chart reviews.

2. Methods - specific contraindications - What are the contraindications for fibrinolytic therapy?

3. Page 9 Statistical analysis - I would recommend not relating pre-hospital time to outcomes (i.e. LOS) because you can't adjust for important confounders (i.e. severity of illness, treatments, etc). I would just relate pre-hospital times to patient factors as you have done (medical history, age, sex, treatment approach).

4. Page 11 "The time delay to hospital presentation was "marginally longer." in women than men. How much longer? Was it significant in your Fisher's exact test? Also, where do you report the relationship between pre-hospital time delay and age, sex, SES that you outlined in your methods sections? You should consider presenting these data in a table. Also, do pre-hospital times differ between those that arrived by ambulance (N=103) and those that didn't? You may want to include this also.

5. You include information on discharge treatments, heparin, and fibrinolytics which is excellent, but you don't include any information on other acute MI treatments (i.e. aspirin at hospital arrival, beta blocker at hospital arrival). Can you obtain this information? If so please include it.

Minor Essential Revisions:
1. Abstract - Under results - indicate that this is within the first 59 minutes of SYMPTOM ONSET

2. pg 18 "Despite small numbers in our study, a gender problem in the Bulgarian health care system could be presumed." You still don't have enough information to conclude this. I would recommend wording such as the following: "The results of this study, including the lower use of fibrinolytic therapy among eligible women
than men, raises the possibility of gender differences in AMI treatment in Bulgaria."

3. Table 1. I believe "Collage" is mis-spelled (College). Also, what is the Bulgarian currency symbol - is it the "Lev?" I would spell it out and offer a conversion to a more commonly recognized currency (i.e. US dollar or Euro) so international readers can put the monthly income numbers in perspective.

Discretionary Reviions:  
1. Abstract - Recommend ending conclusion with a positive comment - something like "Additional research and improvements in health services are needed to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Bulgaria."

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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