Reviewer’s report

Title: A new model of integrated primary-secondary care for complex diabetes in the community: a randomised controlled trial

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Reviewer: Peter EH Schwarz

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you very much for giving me the chance to review the article “A new model of integrated primary secondary care for complex diabetes in a community: a randomized controlled trail”

The specific purpose of the work from the authors is to build on the promising results from previous colleagues and to study and evaluate a new model of diabetes care with a more rigorous study design. This is an important challenge and there is a significant need that this needs to be done. The authors give response to colleagues in Australia and the UK, but there are more chronic care models available. Recently one was installed in Catalonia with a very much intensive spectrum as well as some years ago another one was installed in Germany and evaluated by using an observational design including more than 300,000 patients [1]. Maybe the authors can give reference to this work.

The study questions are appropriate.

The recruitment and randomization procedure is quiet intensive. There is maybe a risk that the participants, who are randomized to usual care, still show an effect due to the fact that they know that they participate in the study. This cannot be fully excluded and I also don’t think that it’s a major problem, but the authors may comment later on this.

Intervention

The intervention is well described. I have one open question. Is there a background of having a practice guideline for the intensive diabetes management? And what does this guideline (if it exists) about referrals to other colleagues or is all the intervention done in one center? This was not fully clear after reading this chapter, but I also didn’t have the time to look at the referenced paper where the authors mention that it was previously described. If all the information is there, the authors should include a sentence that all the details regarding the model can be found in this paper.

Economic indicators

We always try to split of in direct and indirect medical and non-medical costs. Maybe the authors can give a statement what cost category they exactly address and over what period of time.

Discussion

I think the study is important and should be published. I have a little bit a concern
regarding the evaluation. As far as I understand, data collection will only be performed for one year. If you look at the model in Germany [1], the evaluation was done over 3 years and main effects were seen late. Maybe the authors can give an idea in the discussion how they would like to extrapolate the data from their study period.

Furthermore, I am a little bit concerned that the intensity of the study assessment will have an effect on outcome, but this is not related to the model. How can the authors assure that in the final results they measured a model effect and not the study effect?

And finally, will the adherence to medical guidelines be tested. In some of the previous models an interesting effect was seen, that due to the model the professional was tended to adhere more to guidelines if those guidelines were seen as practice guidelines.

I have not read this in the manuscript, but maybe the authors can give a statement about it.

Interestingly would be also to see whether the authors used the Wagner’s model [KJ1] as baseline or what was their general reference for developing the model.