Reviewer’s report

Title: AUtomated Risk Assessment for Stroke in Atrial Fibrillation (AURAS-AF), an automated software system to promote anticoagulation and reduce stroke risk: study protocol for a cluster randomised controlled trial

Version: 3 Date: 20 August 2013

Reviewer: Timothy Kenealy

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions: none

Minor discretionary revisions: please clarify the following points.

1. Methods/ study design: are the pilot practices later eligible to be part of the main study (it would be ‘cleaner’ to keep them out of the main study).

2. Process evaluation: the role of NVivo was described more accurately in the original version – i.e. that it is a ‘dumb filing cabinet’, a software tool that helps keep track of work done by the researchers. The new text has been condensed and appears to imply that the software does some of the smart thinking. The qualitative component of this study is relatively weak compared with the quantitative component, at least in terms of its description in this proposal. The authors might find the notion and framework of design-reality gap useful (Heeks R. Health information systems: failure, success and improvisation. Int J Med Inf 2006;75(2):125-37).

3. Sample size; the 25% change due to the intervention, is this absolute or relative?

Thanks for the work done to shorten and re-arrange the text. I think it is much improved.

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.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.