Reviewer's report

Title: Factors associated with general practitioners' awareness of depression in primary care patients with heart failure: Baseline-results from the observational RECODE-HF study

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Reviewer: Bhautesh Dinesh Jani

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting study on presentation and identification of depressive symptoms in patients with heart failure in primary care. The sample size and methodology seems appropriate for the research question studied. However, I would like to make following important recommendations:


Methods/Results: The paragraph in the Results section beginning with "Thus, the phenomenon may result from patients with a diagnosis of depressive..." Line 243 onwards should go in Methods section.

The authors state that GP awareness was present in 201 patients (table 2) and 407 patients (if the criteria using antidepressants was applied). However in Table 3, the sample size (N) in the models are 431 and 417 respectively for models 1 and 2. Can you please explain, how these N were derived?

Also please add confidence intervals to the odds ratio in Table 3.

More importantly, it will be relevant to investigate the factors associated with GP unawareness of depressive symptoms for those who were deemed +ve to have depressive symptoms (as opposed to focusing on GP awareness only).
Discussion:

Limitations: There is a risk of sampling bias which is inevitable with the design of the study which was chosen, this should be acknowledged in the limitations. To elaborate, less than 10% of GPs who were invited took part and less than 25% of patients who were invited took part in the study.

In my opinion, the discussion section, after describing the strength and limitations, could be made more succinct. Although, I do like the headings chosen by the authors.

Finally, one of the major implications could be identifying factors (patients and GP related) associated with GP unawareness of depressive symptoms (going back to my comments above). This in turn may help us identifying those heart failure patients who are likely to have depressive symptoms without GP being aware of them and targeting depression screening.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

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