Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient-related factors associated with an increased risk of being a reported case of preventable harm in first-line health care: a case–control study

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Reviewer: Jose Joaquin Mira

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This study seeks to identify which patient-related factors are associated with an increased risk of harm in patients with reports of safety incidents. The study has been conducted with primary care and emergency patients. Data have been extracted from Sweden's mandatory damage incident reporting systems. No data are provided on the level of compliance with this reporting duty, nor on the number of incidents reported. The severity of these incidents is not known. They seem to be classified as such by the reporters themselves. The degree of variability and quality of the information that constitutes the starting point of the study is not known.

The study seeks to provide information on both primary care and emergencies. They are setting quite different. For example, although there may be healthcare pressure and haste, in primary care the professional knows their patients and has been providing them with care for some time.

The study was not focused on psychiatric illness patients. However, the study at the end revolves around that these patients have a higher risk of suffering an adverse event, specifically based on the results it appears that above all a diagnostic error. This was not the main objective of this study.

The study states that most preventable adverse events were due to diagnostic errors. However, the literature agrees that most are related to medication errors, and this point should be noted. On the other hand, most of the diagnostic errors reported seem to originate in hospitals so I don't quite understand what data are being provided and originating in primary care or emergencies.

The authors assert that there is a small number of studies on the frequency and causes of safety incidents in primary care and emergencies. It is true, as they point out, that the number of studies is greater in hospitals, but this study does not provide any new information on what is already known (except that unlike the rest, the main cause of preventable adverse events are diagnosis errors), see for example recent systematic reviews Panagoti et al. BMJ 2019;366:l4185) or those cited by the authors themselves. In the introduction, the authors acknowledge that usually the number of adverse events related to medication errors exceeds diagnostic errors.

Age, comorbidity, income, diagnosis of mental illness are usually related to an increased risk of suffering a preventable adverse event, so authors should make greater effort to justify the usefulness, novelty and application of the results of their study.
Other questions.

Is the severity of adverse events in primary care and emergency care comparable?

It is stated that 'the preventable harm was mostly somatic harm'. What other type of harm is expected? What definition of adverse event has been used?

Considering the results and that there are fewer studies in mental health, have you considered focusing the study in this direction?

Patients may have a greater risk depending on the geographical area of the country, the type of center, the experience or other factors of the professional, probably there are factors other than those studied that could be of greater interest. These potential factors are not commented or considered in the Discussion Section.

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.

No

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

No

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.

I am able to assess the statistics

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