Reviewer's report

Title: Healthcare decision-making in end stage renal disease-patient preferences and clinical correlates

Version: 3 Date: 19 August 2015

Reviewer: Sabine van der Veer

Reviewer's report:

Many of my points have been sufficiently addressed by the authors. However, some remained.

Major compulsory revisions

a) I am not satisfied with the authors’ reply to my point 5. One cannot assume that there is no effect of centre on the outcome merely based on the fact that “centres reported similar structure of pre-dialysis education programmes with access to nurse specialists for information... ”. The authors should check for any centre effect by adding centre as an extra level to their multivariable models, and report the methods/findings of the multilevel analyses in the manuscript, either as the main analyses (in Table 3/4), or as supplementary sensitivity analyses.

b) I do not agree with the authors’ reply to my point 2. Many previous studies have already shown that patient characteristics are associated with modality; I do not see how reconfirming that with the authors’ data would merit a separate study. Ignoring this existing knowledge when building the model decreases the strength of the findings. Therefore, the authors should either revise their current modelling approach, or acknowledge in the Discussion (as a study limitation) that they did not check whether the variables in their model satisfied the criteria for confounding, and that this may have resulted in some associations being potentially mediated by other factors in the model.

c) Related to my point 4: the authors’ reply is satisfactory, but they should report in the Methods section of the manuscript that they executed a sensitivity analysis. The results of the sensitivity analysis should be reported in the text of Results section and/or as a footnote to Table 4.

d) The authors’ reply to my point 6 is satisfactory, but should be made available to BMC Nephrology readers as (supplementary) information in the manuscript.

Minor essential revisions

e) The second part of the sentence on line 25-26 in the abstract (pg. 2) doesn't read well ("...and 30 prospectively observed subset of ESRD patients."). Please rephrase.

f) Please make sure the term used to refer to study group is used consistently in Tables 3 and 4 (now ‘Group’ in Table 3 upper panel, ‘Cohort’ Table 3 lower panel, and ‘Study group’ in Table 4).
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests