Reviewer's report

Title: Recruitment and participant baseline characteristics in the Dialysis Outcomes in those aged 65 years or older study

Version: 1 Date: 24 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Meg jardine

Reviewer's report:

The authors have addressed most of my concerns. The extra material included is helpful, particularly for an international audience.

Methods

I appreciate the author's response which is essentially that the accelerated cohort design is appropriate and they anticipate there will be no impact of competing risks. The extra data showing increasing comorbidity counts with dialysis vintage is helpful but does not exclude a survival bias (eg everyone's health may worsen on dialysis, but the health of people who die worsens more quickly). Observational data from other settings shows mortality rates differ according to dialysis vintage (and are higher in the first year of dialysis - eg USRDS 2011 fig 6.2). The methodology is important as group intends to use the longitudinal data to identify predictors of outcomes and QOL (line 1-2, page 4). Examples of other chronic disease settings where the method has been applied would be illustrative. If there are none, an outline of intended approaches would be helpful and essential to understand the intended design. An alternative would be to remove references to the design.

Abstract, p5-6. "From the cross-sectional data at baseline, we hypothesise that HRQoL differs between patients according to: sex, ethnicity, comorbidities, type of dialysis treatment, health service satisfaction, and duration of dialysis."

I agree that the hypothesis is worth mentioning in this paper. My point was simply that the author's hypothesis appears to be a conclusion they have drawn from their analyses - not an aim they had prior to collecting data.

P-values for comparison with the total NZ dialysis population or with the general population are not given. I will leave it to the editors to determine whether these are necessary.
Please confirm that you have included your review in the 'Comments to Author' box?

As a minimum standard, please include a few sentences that outline what you think are the authors' hypothesis/objectives, their main results, and the conclusions drawn. Your report should constructively instruct authors on how they can strengthen their paper to the point where it may be acceptable for publication, or provide detailed reasons as to why the manuscript does not fulfill our criteria for consideration. Please supply appropriate evidence using examples from the manuscript to substantiate your comments. Please break your comments into two bulleted or numbered sections: major and minor comments.

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NA

Are you able to assess the statistics?

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- Is the exact sample size (n) reported for each experimental group/condition (as a number, not a range)?

- Are the description of any error bars and probability values appropriate?

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