Reviewer's report

Title: A Comparison of Medical Outcomes and Healthcare Costs in the End-of-Life Between Dialysis Patients with and without Cancer: A National Population-based Study

Version: 2 Date: 14 Apr 2019

Reviewer: Devika Nair

Reviewer's report:

Minor comments:

Abstract

- Background:
  o Would add 1 sentence to explain why this is an important area of investigation (healthcare costs?) and also why you chose to stratify analyses by with vs without cancer. The last sentence in the first paragraph of the manuscript is nice and captures some of this.

- Results:
  o Specify whether hemodialysis or peritoneal dialysis (or both)
  o Line 17 - remove 'However'

Manuscript:

- Page 5, Line 13-15 - It remains unclear why the authors state that this means that the mortality rate of dialysis patients in Taiwan was comparable to that of the United States
- Page 6, Line 19 - would add the word 'the'
- Page 7, Line 15-16 - If you would like to keep this in the manuscript, would rephrase to: 'chronic dialysis is associated with a higher risk of cancer' and include a possible explanation of why
- Page 8, Line 1 - Change 'improvement' to 'improvements'
- Page 11, Line 18-19- would include timepoint at which cancer was ascertained
- Page 14, Line 7 - Does this mean that the patient in question received a kidney transplant after having been on chronic dialysis? This is a little unclear, would explain or omit.
- Page 15, Line 19 - Change to 'statistical significance'
- Page 16, Line 16-17 - "The results for restricted patients with hemodialysis were similar"
  - this seems unclear; would explain further.
- Page 17, Line 10 - remove 'However'
- Page 18, Line 7-8 - can the authors specify what problems and symptom treatments they are referring to?
- Page 18, Line 8-11 can omit
- Page 19 - Would start a new paragraph to begin the edited section in red
Page 22-23 - "DC patients could benefit from receiving less CPR treatments and similar health care costs in the final month of life compared with D patients" - would omit this sentence

General comments:
- Would include inability to measure whether patient received a kidney transplant vs. died as a limitation, and would also include the lack of data on patients' treatment preferences at the end of life as a limitation
- Would be interesting to note whether a higher percentage of patients in the DC group had a "do not resuscitate" order in the chart, if this information is available
- Would try to separate out DC vs D patients in Table 4. Readers may also be interested in hearing the authors' proposed explanations for why certain factors were more predictive of quality indicators (could select 1 or 2) in the Discussion

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?
- Are the statistical test(s) used in this study appropriate and well described?
- 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?
- Are all error bars defined in the corresponding figure legends?
- Has a sample size calculation been included, or a description and rationale about how sample sizes were chosen?

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**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
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Yes

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Needs some language corrections before being published

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