Reviewer's report

**Title:** How much do rheumatologists and orthopaedists doctor's modalities impact the cost of arthritis in Cyprus?

**Version:** 5  **Date:** 13 March 2015

**Reviewer:** Raymond Oppong

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major compulsory revisions**

This paper covers an important topic. It assesses the direct cost of arthritis in the Nicosia province in Cyprus.

A major issue is that the data analysis has not been described in sufficient detail. The authors simply state that “an excel spreadsheet was used to establish the statistical analysis of the data.” How was this done? More information on the way in which the data were analysed is needed. E.g. what methods were used? How did the authors come up with an annual cost? It is essential that the reader is provided with this information. Was the main aim to establish a yearly cost, monthly cost etc.? This should be spelt out in the methods section.

What was the rational for limiting the study to private orthopaedists or rheumatologists? The introductory section could benefit from a bit more information on how the healthcare system in Cyprus is organised and why there was the need to limit the analysis to the private sector.

In the abstract, the authors state that “A questionnaire based on Greek and international research was completed...” but there is very little information on how this questionnaire was developed. Is the questionnaire described in detail elsewhere? If so, please provide a reference or a detailed description as an appendix.

**Minor essential revisions**

Abstract Line 21: “(10/1/1012)” please correct the date.

Abstract Line 22: The statement “with a sample of specialists in orthopaedics and rheumatology (50%)” is not really clear. What does (50%) represents? Please rephrase this sentence.

Introduction Line 82: “The research on the cost of osteoarthritis is very limited in our country.” Authors should make it clear what country they are referring to.

Results Line 153: “The last question addressed new incoming cases of osteoarthritis that the participating physicians treated...........” Once again, it would have been helpful for the reader to have an idea of how the questionnaire looks like/how questions were asked in order to make a judgement.
With respect to the results, it is not really clear how some figures should be interpreted. E.g. line 170-171 “The cost for such tests is estimated at 120€. The total cost, including the physician’s office visit was estimated at 150€” is this a cost per patient? Is this an annual cost? Monthly cost?

Line 182: “During stage 1 the average number of visits to the private practitioner’s office was estimated at 1.4.” over what time period? week, month, year? There are several instances where it is difficult for the reader to determine the time period being considered.

Discretionary revisions
Tables: Is it possible to present standard deviations as well?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests