Reviewer's report

Title: The changing patterns of dispensing branded and generic drugs for the treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease between 2006 and 2011 in Japan: a retrospective cohort study

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Reviewer: Karoline Mortensen

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The changing patterns of dispensing branded and generic drugs for the treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease between 2006 and 2011 in Japan: a retrospective cohort study

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript. This is an interesting study with a unique dataset.

Minor essential revisions

The background on generics in Japan is interesting, but it would be helpful to have more of a context of the Japanese healthcare system. For example, “To date, several policies and measures…” (page 3, line 14) it would be useful to know if these are federal policies, or private insurance policies, and to know about the copayment structure in Japan.

I’d like a better context of the data set- are the claims data for one employer, one insurance company, or…? Are these only individuals with private insurance?

Page 4, line 6 PPI is used but hasn’t been written out- it is written out farther down on the page and should be moved up to the first use.

Page 5, lines 15-25 The authors don’t explain why it is important to distinguish among the four dispensing patterns.

Page 6 line 13, the exclusion criteria 2) isn’t clear- does it mean patients with any diagnosis and medication during hospitalization? Specifically a GERD diagnosis?

Overall, how were the exclusion criteria determined- are the consistent with the literature?

Page 7 the analysis section is one long paragraph that is hard to follow. Are the values plotted in figures 1, 2, and 3 adjusted at all for age, sex, etc.?

I am not sure I follow the interpretation of the results. Page 8 lines 14 -15, what does it mean to say after switching patients were likely to receive PPIs?

Major revisions:

Page 11, line 19 I don’t know that I would call this a longitudinal analysis. It seems you are comparing descriptive statistics for each year, and making inferences based off these changes. The data are available for regression analysis- why aren’t there regression results?
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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