Author's response to reviews

Title: Cost of Stroke: A Controlled National Study Evaluating Societal Effects on Patients and Their Partners

Authors:

Poul J Jennum (poul.joergen.jennum@regionh.dk)
Helle K Iversen (helle.klinigenberg.iversen@regionh.dk)
Rikke Ibsen (rikke@i2minds.dk)
Jakob Kjellberg (Jakj@kora.dk)

Version: 4  Date: 14 June 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer: Rebecca Kandiyali  
Reviewer's report:
Minor essential
1. Please add currency to tables 3&5. Please add legend explaining 'net' – from whose perspective?  
*These details have been added*

2. English language needs to be improved and typos corrected. A few I've picked out are those that impede understanding: 'Page 3 line 5 'familial' not familiar. Page 10 line 23 'presented with' - and then, don't you think 'functional limitations' might be what you were initially after? (Sorry for my suggestion of role limitations previously...!  
The paper has been reviewed by a native English translator

3. Please add references to sources of costs and data.  
*This information has been added*

4. Please remove 'selection against most diseased patients' as not necessary.  
*This has been deleted*

5. It may be appropriate to identify this as a cost of illness study at the same time as you clarify observational study design (which you have called case-control).  
*Thank you for the suggestion. We have done this.*

6. Page 3 line 21 what 'consequences' have you considered? I am not sure this is relevant?  
*We have altered the sentence accordingly.*

Reviewer: Josefine Persson  
Reviewer's report:
Abstract – result:
It is preferable to use following statement “The annual economic burden for stroke was estimated to...”  
*Corrected*

Introduction:
Second paragraph, last sentence: The cost estimation of your study does not include home nursing or nursing homes. Neither is the cost of informal care given by partners included (please find further comment under Discussion). By this the study do not have a total national socioeconomic perspective, please correct sentence.  
*In light of this comment, we have deleted this sentence*

Result:
Total health cost per year – it is preferable to estimate the economic burden for the first year separately due to a peak of healthcare costs during the first year. To sum the annual cost during that long period with the peak during the first year is misleading. However, if you refer to the economic burden during first year after
stroke onset you, this needs to be clarified. 
*We have calculated these figures and included them in the results and clarified.*

**Discussion:**

Fifth paragraph: A cost of illness analysis with a societal perspective should include all costs due to an illness. By this, the economic consequences for the partners is usually included as the economic value of the informal care, i.e. the economic value of the care and support given by the partner to the stroke survivors. Please mention in the discussion that informal care is not included and you have chosen another perspective to illustrate the partner’s consequences. As mentioned in earlier review, it is necessary to add a paragraph were you discuss your estimation of the economic burden of stroke in Denmark compare to previous cost of illness analysis. Your cost estimation is lower than previous cost estimations and it is necessary to give your reflection of this facts. It is not only due to the study population have a larger proportion of individuals in pension age, similar age structure is in previous cost of illness analysis of the stroke diseases. Is not the major reason for the economic burden of stroke due to the fact that home nursing or nursing care is not included in the cost estimation? Previous cost of illness have shown that home care and nursing care give rise to the majority of the costs after the first year. This is a limitation of your study and needs discussed in a larger extent.

*Thank you for these comments. We have incorporated these points in the discussion*

Table 3 and 5.

Please clarify if you refer to the costs during the first year or the total period.

Please also clarify if you present the costs in DKK or another currency.

*The costs are presented in Euros, as we now specify.*

**General comments:**

It is preferable to use the term economic burden instead of just burden or health and social burden. Further on, use the term health care costs instead of health costs.

*We have corrected this in the new version of the manuscript.*

The manuscript would benefit from another language check, preferable from someone with health economic expertise.

*This has been done, as suggested.*