Reviewer's report

Title: The impact of multimorbidity on foot health outcomes in podiatry patients with musculoskeletal foot pain: a prospective observational study

Version: 1 Date: 06 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Hylton Menz

Reviewer's report:

The authors have carefully and thoughtfully responded to the reviewers' comments and the manuscript has improved as a result. Although there are several inherent limitations with these data, these shortcomings have been acknowledged in an open and transparent manner and I think the paper is of value to the readership of JFAR.

I still have some mild residual concern regarding the reporting of the response rate/recruitment rate. I agree with the authors that in the context of this study design, a standard 'response rate' might not be an appropriate measure of response as we do not know how many of these individuals were eligible. However, I also think that the 'recruitment rate' of 74.7% (although technically correct) may provide an (unintentionally) inaccurate impression of how representative the participants are, for the same reason. That is, we do not know what proportion of the invited population were eligible, but we cannot assume that those who responded (and were eligible) are necessarily representative of the invited population who were eligible, as a range of factors may have influenced participants' decision to participate (in surveys such as these, participants are generally healthier and of higher socioeconomic status than those who decline to participate).

I think the authors have done a good job in reporting the response in the flowchart In Figure 1. However, I think something like the following statement needs to be included in the results: "Of the 1,329 invitations sent, 193 individuals responded (14.5%). Of these, 154 (79.8%) were eligible, and of these 115 (74.7%) were enrolled". This will help the reader understand that while the recruitment rate of eligible responders was high (75%), the overall response from the initial mail-out was low (14.5%).
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal