**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Reporting Quality of Pilot Clinical Trials in Chronic Kidney Disease Patients on Hemodialysis: A Methodological Survey

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 19 Dec 2018

**Reviewer:** Darren Churchward

**Reviewer's report:**

Kosa et al. present a review investigating how well previously published reports of pilot trials, adhere to the relatively new CONSORT reporting checklist for pilot and feasibility studies. Clear and comprehensive reporting of research studies is important to ensure a transparent process which aids in critique and reproducibility of studies. Until 2016 there have been no specific guidelines from CONSORT for the reporting on pilot and feasibility studies.

The authors highlight in their manuscript that previous research has shown clinical trials involving haemodialysis patients have tended to have low reporting quality. However, the quality of pilot and feasibility trails in this patient population is not known. Furthermore, trials in haemodialysis patients are essential to improve outcomes for patients, who tend to have relatively low quality of life and high disease/treatment burden. This is reflected in the high economic burden for treatment, a trend seen globally.

Whilst highlighting issues surrounding reporting quality is important, I do have a few questions regarding the manuscript presented; these are listed below:

**Introduction:**

Page 3 Line 11 contains a spelling error "priorized" -> prioritized

Page 3 Line 10-14: this sentence seems a little out of place in relation to the topics covered in this study. How do results from SONG-HD relate to reporting quality of studies?

**Methods:**
Would it not have been more appropriate to exclude the CONSORT items with a "not applicable" option form calculating means, counts and percentages instead of including them as "yes"? Including them in the analysis as you have may inflate the results.

The authors state they carried out a Poisson regression, however, do not present these results in the report.

The description around calculating incidence rate ratios is lacking. How have the incidence rate ratios been estimated, by tabulating and calculating by hand, or from the Poisson regression? What/how have the adjusted IRR's been adjusted? More explanation of this would be beneficial and clearer.

Page 7 line 8 contains spelling errors: "measure" -> measured and the word "items" is repeated twice in the sentence.

Results:

Although results some IRR's have p-value <0.05, the actual values are still very small. For example, increasing sample size by 20 participants results in IRR =1.021 (1.004,1.037) this suggests a 2.1% increase in reporting completeness. Is this a significant increase or a statistical artefact (perhaps related to multiple hypothesis tests)?

General comments:

It may aid readability to refer to the patient population as just haemodialysis (HD) patients rather than chronic kidney disease patients on haemodialysis.

Supplementary material

Some coding information appears to be missing.

Level of interest

Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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