Reviewer's report

Title: Emergency department patient safety incident characterization: an observational analysis of the findings of a standardized peer review process

Version: 2 Date: 25 May 2014

Reviewer: Asad Patanwala

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written manuscript on an important topic. Below are some comments to help strengthen the paper.

Discretionary Revisions

1) Background, 4th paragraph - a secondary objective was to describe the peer review process. This is part of the methods of the paper. A table/flow chart that summarizes the process will be valuable for other institutions.

2) Methods and measurements, paragraph 4 - the authors used a classification system to categorize the PSI that appears to be created by the authors. Please discuss how this was developed? Need to explain in the article why a standard taxonomy as recommended by the Joint Commission was not used (Chang A, Schyve PM, Croteau RJ, O'Leary DS, Loeb JM. Int J Qual Health Care. 2005;17:95-105). The taxonomy by TJC characterizes the impact, cause, type and domain of PSIs. For instance, perhaps a taxonomy specific to emergency medicine is needed?

3) Methods and measurements, paragraph 4 - if there was a dispute in categorization of the PSI, then a majority vote was taken. Do the authors have data regarding how often this was required? For which types of PSI's (within practitioner-based errors) did these occur.

4) Results - There were 188 cases reviewed and 152 were found to have errors. Would add a sentence about why the remaining 36 met criteria based on initial screening but then were excluded.

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