Reviewer's report

Title: Forecasting daily attendances at an emergency department using time series analysis

Version: 3 Date: 7 December 2008

Reviewer: Jennifer Peel

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Minor Essential Revisions

I think the manuscript is in good shape and I have relatively comments regarding this version of the manuscript. I still disagree with the authors about the use of the term "association" versus "prediction." The term "association" is used twice in the second paragraph of the Discussion section - these terms should be changed to predictive. Building a predictive model is different than building a model to evaluate an association.

Additionally, the Limitations section should include the fact that, as far as I can tell, the authors did not evaluate alternate forms of the predictor variables (e.g., squared, cubed, non-linear forms); these forms may be more predictive in a model. The Limitations should also include a discussion of the fact that this method may not be useful to a hospital if scheduling personnel is done several weeks in advance (include information regarding for what time period this could be done).

Finally, the explanation regarding the "date" variable is still not clear in the text (Abstract and Methods). It sounds like the actual variables in the model were day of week, month of year, and public holidays indicator, so the term date should be removed entirely because date was not a term in the model.

Discretionary Revisions:

Results, Time Series Analysis, second paragraph: the term "affected" in not very clear in this sentence. Do you mean predicted?

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.