Reviewer's report

Title: Shared component modelling as an alternative to assess geographical variations in medical practice: gender inequalities in hospital admissions for chronic diseases

Version: 3 Date: 23 September 2011

Reviewer: Lawrence Ndekeleni Kazembe

Reviewer's report:

Shared component modelling as an alternative to assess geographical variations in medical practice: gender inequalities in hospital admissions for chronic diseases.

The above entitled manuscript is well-written, with well captured objectives, brief literature review, and methodology. Based on my assessment, it is a novel application of the SCM to identify gender disparities in medical practices. My comments, therefore, are minor, and are on the presentation of results.

1. In the abstract: The rates of hospitalization provided should be comparative. What is given here is only for elderly men with chronic conditions. The readers would be well informed if the other key groups are also presented.

2. The rates should also be accompanied by range or IQR or 95% CI, for the estimates. For example, the spatial correlation components in men and women should be complemented with 95% CI, so too the 6% provided.

3. page 22, Table 1: the presentation of IQ contains both commas and dashes. Please use one format.

4. page 24, Table 3: correct spelling for "unstructured" which has been written as "Unestructured".

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