Reviewer’s report

Title: Selecting long-term care facilities with high use of acute hospitalizations: Issues and options

Version: 1 Date: 15 May 2014

Reviewer: Eunice Park-Lee

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Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Classification of potentially avoidable hospitalizations (PAHs)

The main purpose of the paper is to assess different methods to select LTC facilities with high rates of PAHs. But I cannot agree that using the list of first, second, or third diagnosis at the time of discharge can correctly classify hospitalizations that were potentially avoidable. Using the list of diagnoses does not seem to differentiate if the hospitalizations were unavoidable, that is, some hospitalizations included as PAHs could have been rather essential and beneficial given the circumstance of the facilities or complex medical conditions of the LTC resident. The author needs to address how using the list of diagnoses can correctly classify PAHs.

2. Literature review

Although the author discusses the list of diagnoses is congruent with other studies/report. However, it will be helpful to provide readers how other researchers in LTC or other care settings had approached the issue of correct classification of PAHs, and discuss the limitations/strengths of the method that the author used for the paper.

3. Methods of ranking

It will be helpful to have brief explanation of why the author “progressively eliminated” facility- and individual-level variables in the model and left with just four variables. I would assume that different variables not adjusted for in the mixed model could be a possible reason for differences in the rankings of facilities using selection methods b and c.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. Description of PAHs

It will be more informative for readers to have descriptive information on PAHs, and descriptive characteristics of residents associated with these PAHs.

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, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.