Reviewer's report

Title: Out of hours care: A profile analysis of patients attending the emergency department and the general practitioner on call.

Version: 1 Date: 20 July 2010

Reviewer: David Dunt

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions

Context: A number of feature of the Belgium health care system, some of which are described in the Discussion are unfamiliar to non-Belgium readers eg the nature of medical insurance. Their absence hinders understanding of the article. They should be outlined in Context.

Discussion (Findings): The absence of data on the severity of the medical problems and the income of the patients are major limitations and should be considered under that section. The absence of income is particularly significant since financial reasons for selection of location for care are frequently under-reported in these interview situations.

The proposals for improvement seem poorly developed and unsupported by the international literature. The literature is referred to in passing but not strongly related to the study’s findings and how these contribute to this literature.

Minor revisions

Abstract: The outline of the methods should be more detailed. The Discussion and Conclusion should be revised in line with revisions to the Discussion and Conclusion in the full article.

Materials: it is not completely clear if the 6th year medical students interviewed patients in the ED and GP surgeries in the same way.

Conclusion: Some material in the Conclusion (including the policy proposals) is not really concluding in nature and should be repositioned.

Table 1 is close to uninterpretable - there are no column headings, the horizontal percentages are unhelpful. The row on age is quite unclear.

Table 2 and 4 could be trimmed, with the latter only reporting significant results

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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'