Reviewer’s report

Title: Comparison of physician referral and insurance claims data-based risk prediction as approaches to identify patients for care management in primary care: an observational study

Version: 1 Date: 7 September 2013

Reviewer: Christopher Burton

Reviewer’s report:

Overall this is clearly written and while one of several papers from this study includes original data.

Compulsory revisions

Methods: there is no estimate of power in this analysis of what might be a convenience sample. What size of mortality difference could you reasonably hope to detect for instance?

Analysis: 20% of patients in the PM group died during the follow up year. Was data on hospital use censored to adjust for that? If that is not possible in an already quite sophisticated analysis, what sensitivity analyses can be conducted?

Discussion: what are the implications of the very modest increase in hospitalisation from the PCP group? Are they selecting people who are not sick enough yet, or is it possible that they actually started doing CM before they were meant to?

Discussion: very little is made of the surprisingly small overlap between the PCP and PM groups (only 10%). While not the focus of the study it warrants some comment, as perhaps does information from other papers that the PCP group were likelier to have taken part in preventive activities before selection.

Essential minor revisions

Background: this refers to five key elements to CM but only lists four,

Discretionary revisions

Discussion: this is less structured than the rest of the paper and is a little hard to follow. Following a standard format here would be worthwhile

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