Reviewer's report

Title: Daytime use of general practice as a predictor for contacts to Out-of-Hours services in primary healthcare for patients with chronic disease: a cohort study

Version: 3  Date: 8 July 2014

Reviewer: David Margolius

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) I might be misunderstanding the intent of the paper, but at the moment I can not reach the same conclusion as the authors without any information on hospitalizations for the patients studied.

Recommendation: Provide data regarding the number of hospitalizations for these patients, or if not possible, I may just need to understand better how GP contacts out-of-hours is a suitable substitute for severity of illness. For example, are patients that seek care out-of-hours really sicker? Or are they just the patients that more appropriate use their GP compared to others who may directly go to the hospital?

2) I'm also uncomfortable with the conclusion that annual visits reduce the number of exacerbations. This is an association, not necessarily a causation. Is it possible that patients who have better control of their illness are more likely to schedule and attend annual routine visits?

Recommendation: I may have missed the evidence to the contrary, but this data is association, and not statistically significant. I think the authors need to re-frame how they describe this finding.

Minor Essential Revisions

3) On page 9, line 209, "it is remarkable that, for most of the disease groups...", in the results section not the place to editorialize the results.

Recommendation: Delete "it is is remarkable that".

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.