Reviewer's report

Title: Annual pattern of peptic ulcer hospitalizations: a retrospective analysis of hospital discharge data of the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy.

Version: 2 Date: 15 December 2009

Reviewer: Brian Smith

Reviewer's report:

Dr. Manfredini et al have submitted an impressively-powered work that will likely be the definitive paper on seasonal variability of PUD. I commend him and his colleagues on their work. I do have some revisions that I would like them to address however.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1) The discussion section lacks focus and adequate organization. It needs to be significantly condensed. Specifically, the 5th paragraph can be combined with the first, and the 3rd and 4th can be combined and all can be tightened up. There is a disconnect between the cited references and their pertinence to this data set.

2) The authors need to increase their emphasis on explanations/etiologies of seasonal admission variables ie what patterns of NSAID use may be leading to some of the seasonal variations in admission, etc. They have shown seasonal variation. Now the reader would like to know the authors' thoughts as to why there is variability and what can be done with this knowledge.

3) The conclusion section needs to be concise and not introduce any new material/concepts/references. This section should be re-written to reflect a true summarization of the material.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1) Overall English is good. The paper just needs to be polished up as far as misspellings/incorrect words/syntax, once all corrections have been made.

Discretionary Revisions:

The study may have slightly more impact if the authors spend a few lines discussing the overall importance of seasonally-associated causal factors of PUD ie NSAID use, alcohol consumption during certain times of the year, seasonal or regional variability in H. pylori infection, etc.

Finally, given the association between low socioeconomic status with H. pylori infection, perhaps the authors should consider commenting on the overall incidence of H. pylori in their region. As the most important etiologic factor in PUD development, the role of H. pylori in this patient population is particularly relevant here.
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:

No to all of the above. I declare that I have no competing interest.