Reviewer’s report

Title: Short-term Geriatric Assessment Units: 30 years later

Version: 1  Date: 28 March 2010

Reviewer: thierry Chevalley

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Minor Essential Revisions

In the introduction, the authors compared GAU (created to offer total and integrated health care to frail elderly who were hospitalized with acute problems) to the American GEMU with similar organizational and operational characteristics. On the other hand, they mentioned on page 3 that GEMU concerned patients in their sub-acute phase. Could the authors give us some comment about this apparent difference.

Results section

- In the text on page 10, the authors mentioned that 54% of the GAU have a mixed care profile and this percentage is 58% in Table 1.
- The comments of the last part of Table 1 regarding the composition of medical staff should be given earlier in the text (page 10 instead of page 13).
- The title of Table 2 is confusing, it could be: “Characteristics of clientele hospitalized in 60 GAU”. Therefore GAU (n=60) have to be removed from the Table 2.
- Regarding other health care professionals, there is some discrepancy that the authors need to comment between the text on page 14: “we observe a constant ratio in the total number of nursing staff per bed with a median value of 4.8, 2.8 and 1.8 par 15 beds during the day, evening, and night shifts respectively” and the ratio given in Table 3 showing a clear drop according to the increase in the size of the GAU, at least for the physiotherapists and occupational therapists.
- On pages 15-16, the authors mentioned that plans for inter-professional intervention are systematically executed in 95% of the GAU, but only 23% archive them in a file after hospitalization and that the medical discharge summary is transmitted to the family doctor in 41%. Since these last percentages could be of importance to improve home care, it could be of interest to know if these percentages are different according to the composition of medical staff, the affiliation to university and to the size of the GAU.

- If there are some interesting differences among GAU regarding the screening or preventive protocols as well as the intervention’s protocols mentioned on page 17, I suggest showing them in a new Table according to the type of GAU (composition of medical staff, university affiliation and/or its size)
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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