Reviewer’s report

Title: Older Adults Who Present to the Emergency Department with Severe and Non-Severe Episodes: Individual Patterns and Group Differences

Version: 5 Date: 17 May 2011

Reviewer: marc sabbe

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The paper formulates clear hypotheses and uses a large dataset to examine these.

Minor remarks:
1. Data collection and processing section: for readers outside the US, CPT evaluation and management codes are not well known. Some brief description is needed.
2. Measurement section: Not within this section or discussion, the background of the grouping is discussed or even any reference given where identical grouping was used.

A important remark or question is: do the results of the study really advance our understanding of the intersection between older adults? No surprising results were found beside the magnitude of each group. The magnitude was also dependent on the definition of each group.

The data provide evidence that the group that could use a possible substitute for other community-based services is substantial, the data also provide evidence that the group will be difficult to motivate to use alternatives. One could expect within the discussion section to suggest potential strategies to do so.

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