Reviewer’s report

Title: The interRAI Acute Care instrument incorporated in an eHealth system for standardized and web-based geriatric assessment: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the acute hospital setting

Version: 1 Date: 8 May 2013

Reviewer: Darryl Wieland

Reviewer’s report:

The authors provide an interesting study of a pilot implementation of the interRAI© Acute Care [AC] instrument on geriatric acute-care wards in three hospitals in Belgium; the AC implementation is a secure web-based software system (BelRAI-software). The authors’ descriptive and analytic objectives are well described, and their selection of a “Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities—Threats” [SWOT] analytic framework of the pilot is useful.

While the authors show that implementation of the platform may have been feasible (at least within the context of the pilot), what comes across—at least to this reviewer—is (a) an uneven or incomplete implementation of interRAI© AC across the geriatrics wards (e.g., lagging collections of ‘preadmission’ and ‘admission’ health status data against prescribed timeframes; the preponderance of completed assessments from one hospital and among a small number of assessors); and (b) little evidence of any uptake of interRAI© AC data by clinicians for clinical management of elderly patients in acute and transitional care. Perhaps this merely reflects inadequacies of the BelRAI platform, or the very early development of reforming clinical decision making and management in acute care to integrate interRAI© AC structures and processes. If the latter, perhaps the rationale for such reforms was not made clear to ward staff and others, particularly the geriatricians, who maintained targeted use of their favored (“first-generation”) assessment tools, and evidently did not much consult the interRAI© scales or client assessment protocols [CAPs]. Or perhaps the basic rationale for the reform of geriatric acute care structures and processes around interRAI© AC is as not well founded as assumed by its developers (see attached file).

I do not see any necessary revisions in this version of the ms. It should be of some interest in the geriatrics world, which seems to be dividing into two “camps” concerning the value of the interRAI enterprise overall and in particular settings.

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