Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of inappropriate medication using Beers criteria in Japanese long-term care facilities

Version: 2 Date: 12 September 2005

Reviewer: David V Espino

Reviewer’s report:

General

This is a well outlined manuscript that need editorial support in English to provide more clarity for the readers.

The investigators examining the validity of the Beers criteria and adverse outcomes (outlined in the discussion section) are particularly good pieces of work and unique to this area of research.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The major weakness is the similarity of the results to other studies. The authors need to make a stronger argument that this is the first study to examine inappropriate use in LTC institutions in Japan.

The authors need to address how terminal patients were handled in the database. If they were unable to separate them then this is an important limitation that deserves discussion.

The background needs complete revision. What general problem will be discussed?, What specific issue within the problem will be addressed?, What is the LTC literature on inappropriate medication usage? What have others done to address the specific issue?, What still needs to be done, or what is still unknown? Why is it important to study Japanese LTC institutions? The purpose of the study should be incorporated in one or two sentences at the end of the background.

The methods need to describe how the LTC facilities were selected and what the universe was. Why were other facilities excluded? Were these only facilities in Tokyo and what are the implications, if so?

The discussion section needs to include comment on the revised percentage of medication use after ticlopidine is removed. (first paragraph of the discussion section) This seems to indicate that Tokyo area LTC institutions may have lower rates than elsewhere which would be an important finding.

Also, as mentioned above, while small, the validity work and adverse outcomes work is a major part of the results. As such, the parts of these paragraphs that should be in the results section should be moved there.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Page numbers were not included which hampers feedback to the authors.
Background
The first sentence in the Background section needs a reference.
The second sentence uses “etc.” which is a nonstandard abbreviation.

Methods
Measurements—the first paragraph on Beers criteria is too wordy and can be reduced to one sentence.

Results
The second paragraph describes communication with Dr. Beers which can be deleted from the paper. Exclusion of external preparations is intuitively acceptable.

Limitations
The authors talk about higher quality facilities in the first paragraph. How did they reach this conclusion? The third sentence talks about racial differences which should either be referenced or deleted.

Conclusions
Need to be rewritten to emphasize the importance of this manuscript. As it reads it is an argument of “sameness”.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
If the LTC universe studied is Tokyo-area only then the title should be changed to reflect that.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare I have no competing interests.