Reviewer's report

Title: Do the Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) and Birmingham Nutrition Risk (BNR) Score Predict Mortality in Older Hospitalised Patients?

Version: 2 Date: 10 July 2008

Reviewer: Elaine Bannerman

Reviewer's report:

I have read the revised manuscript and it is acknowledged that the authors have addressed a number of issues raised in the original review, however there are still concerns over the study design. My comments are detailed below.

1. Reference has been made to more up to date data regarding the prevalence of malnutrition - however p.4 para 1 and p.5 and para 1 present different prevalence figures with no cross-reference.

2. Greater detail of methods used to determine BMI have now been provided. Cox regression analysis has been carried out and age and gender have been taken into consideration. However, as indicated in the original review other significant confounders that are more likely to predict mortality, eg disease status have still not been accounted for. This will significantly bias the results. If this is an audit of usual care, then it is assumed these data would be available?

4. Some measures of dispersion have been presented - p.9 2nd para (IQR 32 - unclear?). P.9 para 2 - last sentence 'Median length of stay correlated with BMI category' - This statement is incorrect and it is also unclear exactly what correlation analysis has been performed. A scatterplot and line of best fit should be used to present the data so that the r value can be further interpreted by the reader.

5. Greater consideration of the census date (2.5 years) and implications, usefulness of this 'lengthy' follow-up in this population group need considered.