Reviewer's report

**Title:** Evaluating quality of care in Geriatric Evaluation and Management Units by a Chart review method and a tracer case

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 22 March 2009

**Reviewer:** Manuel Montero-Odasso

**Reviewer's report:**

General
This study examines the reliability of a novel tool, the Geriatric Care Tool, to evaluate quality of care in elderly people admitted in Geriatric Evaluation Units (GEU) in Montréal. After face validation with a panel of experts, the authors determined the intra and inter-rater reliability in a retrospective chart review using admission for a fall with trauma as a tracer case. Thirty charts were reviewed by three independent and blinded evaluators. The major finding is that the GCT was a reliable instrument to gather information concerning quality of care in GEU using admission due to “falls” as a tracer case. Since evaluation of quality of care in older population is an emerging and complex area of research and care, the findings of this study are of potential interest.

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**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. The manuscript could be benefit from editing that focuses the report on the primary question. For example: Is the primary question to evaluate quality of care in 9 GEU in Quebec? Or, is it the development of a reliable tool for assessing quality of care?

For example, the title suggest that the main objective is to evaluate the quality of care in GUM using a chart review methodology, however, the objectives of this study as stated in the introduction are more related to the creation and validation of a tool for evaluating care rather to evaluate the care itself.

a) The current title is very broad and does not mention anything about validation of the tool.

b) The objective in the Abstract is not stated in a straightforward manner.
c) The first two paragraphs of the Introduction distract from the central point and I would merge them in one paragraph.

2. The design of the study should be clearly stated in the Methods Section: For example; is this a reliability study or is a “chart review study” to evaluate quality of care in Geriatric Units?

3. The manuscript needs some careful editing for clarity (in addition to the need to focus). If this is reliability study, the manuscript may benefit from the use of sub-headings such as content validity, construct validity (if it was explored), reliability, etc.

In addition, the reader may be interested in having more information about the measure itself. For example, how long takes to administer the CGT to one chart? This information also may help to address the external validity and generalizability of this tool to other institutions outside Québec.

4. The Discussion could be tightened up. For example, the first two paragraphs could possibly be moved to “Methods” since they are a justification and rationale of why “falls” has been selected as tracer case for overall quality of care.

5. The Conclusion could be redefined based on the primary findings. I would suggest avoid finishing the manuscript with an example. A concluding sentence following an appropriate end-of-paragraph signal would be more desirable.

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Minor Essential Revisions

1. It would be helpful to include a narrative description of the CGT or provide a reference.

2. Please, provide key words

3. The first 4 tables describing the CGT are busy and difficult to understand. I would suggest providing the information in only one or two tables and to put additional information in an appendix.

4. Our report on the usefulness of a flow chart system and ad hoc forms in evaluating the quality of care and fall prevention in nursing homes the may shed some light on the current study (J Am Med Dir Assoc. 2007;8:300-6).

5. The sentence in page 20 “We are also confident that the Geriatric Care Tool…” is repeated word for word on page 21. As well, there are some typo's in the reference list (e.g., missing periods, “Jama” without capital letters – reference #5, etc).

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

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests in quality of care in older people

Quality of written English: Needs minor language corrections before being
published.

Statistical review: No

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

**Level of interest**: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English**: Needs some language corrections before being published

**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'