Reviewer's report

Title: Long term healthcare costs of infants who survived neonatal necrotizing enterocolitis: a retrospective longitudinal study among infants enrolled in Texas Medicaid

Version: 2 Date: 10 July 2013

Reviewer: Jonathan Mintzer

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript provides important information as it relates to healthcare expenditure among Texas Medicaid-enrolled NEC survivors compared to non-NEC neonates matched on a variety of factors. This information is potentially of interest to numerous clinicians and policymakers, spanning those who manage NICU babies to those who arrange for and provide care to these children over subsequent years.

My previous suggestions for content-based revisions were all satisfactorily addressed.

A very large number of stylistic, grammatical, and typographical errors remain which are all listed below. This manuscript would again benefit from line-by-line proofreading/copy-editing, perhaps by a non-author.

Major Compulsory Revisions
<None>

Minor Essential Revisions

The terms "follow up" and "follow-up" appear interchangeably in the paper; select one for consistency.
Line 84, move comma to follow "infants" rather than "although"
Line 97, remove comma following "such as"
Line 104, remove comma following "strategies"
Line 108, "at the time of birth" is usually not when NEC is diagnosed; consider changing to "during initial hospitalization" or "during birth hospitalization"
Line 108, remove comma following "that" (at end of line)
Line 125, add comma following "stoma"
Line 135, replace hyphen with colon following "conditions"
Line 145, remove space following hyphen (correct to "Mantel-Haenszel")
Line 146, consider removing "the" at end of line
Line 156, remove hyphen after "months:"
Line 165, there appears to be an extra space between "in" and "STATA"
Line 166, consider "between-group" and "model-based"
Line 167, change "were" to "was"
Line 171, consider "well-matched"
Line 175, insert comma after "7%"
Line 183, remove both commas (after "that" and "groups")
Line 191, change to "Also, a significant difference"
Line 193, change to "faced a significantly higher risk"
Line 194, consider rewording "but not after that." Perhaps "but not following this point"
Line 199, remove the word "quite"
Line 200, consider rewording to "The total ambulatory care cost, including home healthcare costs, also was significantly higher..."
Line 201, add "The" before "difference"
Line 207, add comma after "age," at end of line
Line 209, remove the word "over"
Line 210, add comma after "age"
Line 210, consider rewording "made" to "accounted for"
Line 213, add comma after "age"
Line 215, consider changing "showed" to "demonstrated"
Line 232, add comma after "age"
Line 234, change to "model-predicted" or reword to clarify
Line 238, consider removing "Neonatal" from beginning of sentence or change "neonates" to "infants" later in same sentence
Line 246, consider changing "till date" to "to date"
Line 249, change "Black" to "black"
Line 250, consider "When matching NEC infants to controls, we found..."
Line 253, move reference (#36) outside of period
Line 263, add comma after "However"
Line 263-264, consider rewording to "did not differ from matched controls"
Line 265, consider rewording "developing developmental..." Perhaps "These results indicate that the likelihood of experiencing developmental complications causing increased utilization..."
*Line 268-270, one sentence claims statistical significance while the next denies it (my belief is the first sentence compares surgical NEC to controls while the second sentence compares surgical NEC to medical NEC?)
Line 279, remove comma after "wherein"
Line 288, replace hyphen with colon (such as: ...)
Line 295, remove hyphens in "short-bowel-syndrome"
Line 295, add comma after "syndrome"
Line 295, add comma after "Spencer" (to read "Spencer, et al.")
Line 295, change "had reported" to "reported"
Line 299, add comma after "Spencer" (to read "Spencer, et al.")
Line 299, "Medicare" mentioned - do you mean "Medicaid" or is this a comparison to actual "Medicare" charges?
Line 301, add comma after "Also"
Line 304, add comma after "Also"
Line 305, add comma after "Spencer" (to read "Spencer, et al.")
Line 306, add comma after dependence
Line 311, consider rewording to "with failure of intestinal function"
Line 320, reword "within the first 6 months period." Consider "during the first 6 months" or "during infancy"
Line 326, add comma after "Unfortunately"
Line 335, add comma after "state"
Line 336, reword; consider "could be that our findings may not be generalizable..."
Line 343, reword; "the estimates from this population are very useful"
Line 346, add comma after "importantly"
Line 352, reword to "needs to be conducted"
Line 354, consider changing "at the time of birth" to "during the neonatal period" (NEC is not diagnosed at birth)

Table 3, make titles in left column consistent with each other with respect to capitalization (eg. "Failure to Thrive" versus "Failure to thrive," etc.) - use the same style for all entries in this column.
Table 3, Line 533, remove hyphen in "gastro-intestinal"
Table 3, Line 533, there's a long space before "NDD"
Table 3, Line 538, remove hyphen in "amino-acid" and add comma after "metabolism"

Table 4, change "inter-quartile" to "interquartile" below table
Table 5, change "Surgical" to "surgical" in title

Discretionary Revisions
<None>

**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