Reviewer's report

Title: Pediatric screening urinalysis: a difference-in-differences analysis of how a 2007 change in guidelines impacted use

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Reviewer: Natalie Uy

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Discretionary Revisions:

This well-written manuscript examines the impact of the 2007 AAP recommendation to discontinue routine screening urinalysis (UA) in a large sample size of children, using National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey data. From their data, screening UA still persisted in about a quarter of pediatric preventive care visits.

The authors discuss possible explanations for the persistence of screening UA, including lack of awareness of the AAP guideline; conflicting input about the use of screening UA, and use of UA for other reasons other than to detect disease (school / sports participation). The authors also mention that “physicians may have experienced previously cited barriers to guideline adoption, many of which have been noted in studies of pediatricians and family practitioners.” What are some of these barriers? Including some of these barriers in the article may help explain the lack of impact of the 2007 AAP guideline.

Analyses was adjusted for patient race/ethnicity, but race/ethnicity was not included in the table of baseline characteristics. It would be interesting to see the data based on ethnicity, since this may also affect a physician’s decision to continue routine screening UA for patient populations in which kidney disease is more prevalent. For example, it is well known that blacks have a higher prevalence and poorer prognosis of focal segmental glomerulosclerosis than whites; and SLE/lupus nephritis more frequently affects patients of Asian, African or Latino ethnicity.

The limitations of the study are clearly stated, including the inability to distinguish between screening and diagnostic UA using NAMCS survey, leading to misclassification. Another factor leading to misclassification that is not mentioned in the study are patients with underlying kidney disease, who may require yearly UA done by the PMD. These patients should be excluded from the study.

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

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.