Reviewer's report

Title: An examination of the patterns of psychiatric emergency service use by multiple visits patients as a means for their early detection

Version: 1 Date: 6 August 2007

Reviewer: Geoffrey Curran

Reviewer's report:

General

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

1. The "multi-center trial" aspect of the study needs to be described in more detail. It seems to pop out of nowhere and is confusing. It seems like that part of the design is discussed in another paper, but there does not seem to be enough about it in this paper.

2. I am not sure that the analyses on clusters of visits is helpful. Table 4 is very confusing, and from what I can make of the discussion, the addition of this variable to the lessons learned of the paper is only marginal. I would consider removing these analyses from the paper, unless the authors can more clearly state them and make a better case for their involvement.

3. The authors should be more specific about the practical/policy relevance of their study. In the background and discussion/conclusion of the paper they allude to a potential benefit of "early detection". This concept should be fleshed out and discussed further. More specifically, I am confused by the following sentence, "Early detection of multiple visit patients such as those with... via an epidemiology-based information technology can be realistically envisioned." How could such detection be turned into reduction in heavy of the ED? Please what the reader through the possible steps.

4. Table 1 subscript "c" says "OR values were not tabulated for this diagnostic category due to..." I see no ORs in the table at all. Were they there at one point?

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

1. The meaning of the shading in Table 1 should be explained in the note for the table itself.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**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

**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.