Reviewer’s report

Title: Payment for performance (P4P): any future in Italy?

Version: 1 Date: 17 November 2010

Reviewer: Sean Nicholson

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions: none

Minor Essential Revisions:

This paper uses patient-level data from three hospitals to test the feasibility of implementing a pay-for-performance program in Italy. The analysis is appropriate to address the research question and is well executed.

1) In the fifth paragraph of the conclusions section the authors propose a number of reasons why hospitals may actually be performing better than indicated by the current analysis of the existing data. It would be useful to discuss how other countries with more refined pay-for-performance programs have addressed these data challenges. That is, how difficult is it to overcome these data shortcomings, and what must be done to do so?

2) Even though the authors have data on only three hospitals, it would be interesting to compare the performance of the Italian hospitals to the averages in other health systems, such as the United States Medicare averages (available on the Medicare hospital compare web site).

Discretionary revisions: none

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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 below.