Reviewer's report

Title: Reliability of Routinely Collected Hospital Data for Child Maltreatment Surveillance

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Reviewer: Lynn B Meuleners

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Reliability of Routinely Collected Hospital Data for Child Maltreatment Surveillance

An interesting paper that examines the reliability of routinely collected hospital data for child maltreatment

Overall: Long sentences throughout the article, typos which need to be corrected.

Introduction

I think it is beneficial for the reader if you include your operational definition of child maltreatment in your introduction and age-group of your target group.

3rd paragraph, 2nd line – do you mean ‘extracting’ instead of ‘abstracting’.

The aims should be explicitly stated and include information about retrospective chart review, years under investigation, age of target group, databases used in the study etc.

Methods

Were power calculations used to determine sample size for cases and hospitals? If not, how did you arrive at your sample size other than budget considerations?

Why did you include cases under 18 as this age range includes teenagers/adolescents?

Need to include more information about the Queensland Health Admitted Patient Data Collection.

The authors state that 53 hospitals met the criteria but did not mention how many hospitals are in Queensland.

Patient Sample: You refer to your previous paper (Mackenzie et al,) for further information about the assignment of codes to your cohort. However this paper has not been published so you need to include more information in the paper about this aspect of your study.

Data Collection: You mention inclusion and exclusion criteria but have not mentioned what specifically were the exclusion criteria.

Was any training provided to the coders to ensure consistency?

Data Analysis: You need to explain how you handled multiple records per individuals in your analysis.

Results
You repeat a lot of the information in your tables in the results. Perhaps reducing the number of tables and just state the results would be better.

Discussion

Clearly state the limitations of the study and future directions in this area. Also, your reference list is not very long.