Reviewer's report

Title: Length of stay in asylum centres and mental health in asylum seekers: a retrospective study from Denmark

Version: 1 Date: 24 July 2007

Reviewer: Nicholas Horton

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors analyze an innovative longitudinal dataset of mental and physical health care of asylum seekers. This is an interesting and potentially significant topic given the huge medical and psychiatric needs of refugees. There are some limitations, but these are (with minor exceptions) well described. The concerns noted previously have been substantially addressed (albeit without a response from the authors) and the remaining issues are straightforward to address.

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

(1) Table 1 would be more useful if the rate per 1000 asylum seekers was calculated for both somatic referrals and psychiatric referrals, along with the associated 95% confidence intervals

(2) It remains unclear why log10(DUR) is the regression model fit. No justification is given for this. In addition, the model is much less interpretable than a model with DUR entered directly. The association between time and psychiatric use above the 4 visits is still increasing, though it attenuates eventually (which is reasonable and still of concern). The attached figure displays the observed data both ways, and in my opinion, the linear model (not log transformed predictor) makes more sense and is more interpretable by a clinical audience.

(3) Figure 1 would be improved if the lines were added connecting the dots, as well as potentially adding a smoothing spline to indicate a non-parametric fit (see attached file).

(4) Figure 3 pops up from no where (in the Discussion?) Are these observed data? A visualization of the cited results? This was not at all clear.

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

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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:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests