Reviewer's report

Title: Read coding patients with learning disabilities: Lessons from a cohort study

Version: 3 Date: 20 May 2008

Reviewer: Owen Barr

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
In my initial review I did not feel they have been clear about the definitions to be used and a number of conditions I identified in Table 1, are not always associated with learning disabilities, including Autism, Fragile X and Phenylketonuria.

However, to some degree this limitation has been addressed within the paper by noting it as a limitation.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
It appears so, although I am very surprised to see that the term mental retardation is used officially within the UK. This use of this term has now be put in context.

3. Are the data sound?
Given the points raised in response to Q1 above I do not accept that the data is sound.

I accept that the data is sound, within the limitations of the study as reported in this paper.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Appears to in my understanding of what is required, although this is not my specialist area.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
There is a considerable body of literature about access to primary care for people with learning disabilities and this is not integrated into this paper.

I continue to feel there has been a limited attempt to integrate literature available around access to primary care within this paper, for example, published research papers the DRC Report of 2006 Closing the gap.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   This is now clearer that this paper is a component of another study.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes – as revised

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   I continue to feel this paper the lacks the depth of the reference to and support from the literature I would have expected to see in a paper of this nature.

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

   I feel this paper with its limitations now more clearly acknowledged could be supported for publication.

   What next?:

   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'

   **Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

   **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'