Reviewer's report

Title: Status and perspectives of hospital mortality in a public urban Hellenic hospital, based on a five-year review.

Version: 3 Date: 19 November 2007

Reviewer: Robert Anderson

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)

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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)

The paragraphs added by the authors with regard to renal failure and heart failure are helpful, but are not quite sufficient to explain to the reader the problems with using the underlying cause of death in this context. I think a more general paragraph in the methods section is needed at the end of the data source and measurement subsection. This paragraph needs to say something to the effect that focus on the underlying cause may result in the underestimate of medical conditions (such as heart failure and renal failure) that are extremely important from the standpoint of hospital care, but that are often the result of some other underlying cause (such as hypertension or diabetes). In other words, it is often the complications of the underlying cause that are treated at the hospital and not the underlying cause itself. It is important to understand how these complications relate to the underlying cause and to calculate their frequency "in order to produce evidence for upgrading health care (p. 6)."

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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