Reviewer’s report

Title: Asthma Self-Assessment in a Medicaid Population

Version: 1 Date: 9 June 2009

Reviewer: Linda Nelsen

Reviewer’s report:

In general, a well-written, valuable paper which describes the lack of impact of a widely used approach to enhance asthma control when used in a typical medical care setting. The question posed is well-defined. Methods are appropriate, but because of the many facets of the study, were somewhat difficult to follow. The authors appropriately acknowledge limitations in the data.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS

None

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

1. A figure to diagram the project. There are a lot of aspects of the study and it took several reads to understand how all of the pieces fit together. A well-designed schematic would clarify the study

2. Line 117: Reference scores of 19 as a cutpoint for the ACT or justify the use of 19 or less as indicating poor control.

3. Line 121: Were patients contacted by case managers with standard criteria around "high frequency" of reports?

4. Line 208: Clarify that the 95 patients returned ACTS and the 95 patients participating in interviews were or were not the same or overlapping groups.

5. Line 257: Although the algorithm to identify patients with problematic asthma control seems to be specific, it is not possible to make statements about the sensitivity.


7. Consider adding a discussion of how the findings of the telephone survey might have been impacted because such a low percentage of patients were eligible, and among those eligible, the response rate was low.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

8 Lines 100-104: Not sure how the trigger reports fit into the research study. It would also help to know how frequently trigger reports were sent to primary care practice sites

9. Lines 95-100: Indicate any supporting rationale for the specific inclusion criteria defining problematic asthma control. They appear sensible but would be helpful to see rationale for these attributes
10. Table 1 and/or 3: Include # times with trigger report in a past interval of time in tables 1 and 3 to help define history of lack of asthma control

**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.