Reviewer’s report

Title: In-hospital mortality after stomach cancer surgery in Spain and relationship with hospital volume of interventions

Version: 2 Date: 15 June 2009

Reviewer: Salvador S Peiró

Reviewer’s report:

The manuscript has been considerably improved. I have only some minor questions and some discretionary questions (that the authors can choose to ignore).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Abstract. Methods. The statement “We performed a descriptive study ...” should be changed, as has been done in the M&M section, for “We performed a retrospective cohort study...”.

2. Methods. Section 2.1. The Spanish Minimum Basic Data Set uses the International Classification of Diseases 9th revision Clinical Modification (ICD9CM), not the International Classification of Diseases (a three digit system used in Spain for mortality registers, but not in the MBDS). The bibliographical reference is correct (although it corresponds to a much older version of the ICD9CM, a classification that is revised yearly with several modifications).

Discretionary Revisions

3. The hospital LOS for low-volume hospitals (Table 3) is 16 days, versus 21 days for intermediate or high volume hospitals. This implies 24% more days to identify a death as the study outcome (in-hospital mortality). A comment about this in discussion of the limitations of the study would be illustrative for readers.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests