Reviewer’s report

Title: Reliability of medical record abstraction by non-physicians for orthopedic research

Version: 1 Date: 26 March 2013

Reviewer: Angela Colantonio

Reviewer’s report:

This paper has a clear focus and in my opinion is methodologically sound. It was also very well organized, clearly written and a joy to read. The authors also use tables well and discuss limitations /significance of the research well.

Minor to Major compulsory revisions

I have some concerns regarding the originality of this piece of work. At this point, I am not entirely convinced that establishing the quality of Medical record review of non clinicians has not been done to date. Is this because people typically do not report the level of training of reviewers or there has not been focused study of this. I think this should be better established in the literature review.

Minor essential revisions

The other major revision that needs to be done in my opinion is to include the backgrounds of the non clinicians conducting the medical record reviews in the study. What are the educational backgrounds of the non clinicians? Do they have graduate degrees in non clinical areas but trained in research? or a high school education which is not atypical among medical record abstractors in hospitals. I believe this is important information given the nature of this investigation. Again, I believe this level of detail is largely missing from chart review studies.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript.

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 have no competing interests