Reviewer's report

Title: Potential hospital cost-savings attributed to improvements in outcomes for colorectal cancer surgery following self-audit.

Version: 1 Date: 18 November 2009

Reviewer: David Watters

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This paper is a mathematical model for the value of self-audit. Studies evaluating the benefits of audit are few, and usually rely on historical data rather than being strictly controlled. It is wise that they have used data from papers published since 2000 even if these may be based on data from the decade previous to this.

The cost estimates of the value of self-audit might change depending on a surgeon's case-mix, particularly their emergency workload, but also the proportion of low and ultralow anterior resections in their colorectal resections. Although Table 1 gives the emergency/elective proportions

Compulsory Revision: I believe the potential effect of emergencies and case-mix should be discussed though I do not think there is sufficient information

I agree with the authors that a trial of not auditing and auditing would in the current climate be unacceptable and there are few units that do not audit, though not all have robust systems.