Reviewer’s report

Title: A low cost project in a cold economic climate. Operating room data management and the improvement of quality and safety in a surgical block.

Version: 3 Date: 2 August 2012

Reviewer: Alex Macario

Reviewer’s report:

Overall, the article is an earnest and thoughtful study in the interest of their hospital, health system, and the fiscal priority of the Italian government. Well done.

The writing style can be improved. Please have English editor edit the paper.

Major Compulsory Revisions

The manuscript needs to be properly divided into commonly used sections, eg introduction/rationale/background, methods, results, discussion. There are several areas where text should be moved to the appropriate section, for overall scientific narrative flow. This change that will strengthen this paper and make it navigable for the reader.

Please add description of the existing literature to introduction on the topic to contextualize this study. Additionally, the goal of the study should be made sharper.

Please add more detail for methods.

The results need more organization. Please identify the outcomes of interest and list the results measured. A chart or table with these measurements would also help to clarify. Also needed are more descriptive statistics and inferential statistics to prove there was a change.

In the discussion the usefulness of the study is well discussed, but only in the context of their hospital and health system. For this paper to make an impact, it should be discussed in the context of existing literature. How this study adds to the field, what is unique about it, etc.

Minor Essential Revisions-these are annotated to attached pdf file with red numbers

1. Suggestion “The main fiscal priority”

3. “The Surgical Patient Path”

4. The wording in this sentence is awkward. Suggest “…improve OR risk management and improve clinical outcomes.”

5. The word “specific” is redundant and can be omitted.
6. There appear to be 2 objectives – the mapping and the monitoring.
7. Again, awkward wording here. Suggest “…and to monitor each step of OR occupancy over time.”
8. Suggest “…improve OR effectiveness and efficiency…”
9. This is a sentence fragment.
10. If this is the Methods section of the abstract, then it is not sufficient. This section should be used to describe how the tools are used, not what they are.
11. Suggest “…weekly, monthly, or annual…”
12. This paragraph is in the present tense, and should be in the past tense to describe the conclusion based on the results.
13. Citation please.
14. Run-on sentence. Recommend “…National Health Service costs. In view of this…”
15. No comma needed.
16. Recommend “In this way, utilization of precious resources can be rationalized…”
17. Suggest: “…and clinical risks reduced to improve clinical outcomes, reduce costs, and minimize liability.”
18. “alongside each other” is redundant. Suggest “together.”
19. No need for comma
20. Suggest: “the health needs of the population.”
21. I suspect what you mean to say is that the steps are difficult to identify when looking at the system as a whole. Suggest re-working this sentence to make that clearer.
22. “Absolute transparency” is redundant.
23. Run-on sentence.
24. This is a sentence fragment.
25. Recommend “activity”
26. It is difficult to understand what this sentence means. Please consider re-writing it.
27. I note there are “aims” for this project and “objectives”. Are these meant to be different? Seeing different aims and objectives make it difficult to understand which one was the impetus for the project and which outcome is indeed primary.
28. The phrase “critical issues that emerge during the elaboration of results” is difficult to understand.
29. Comma
30. Suggest changing “bringing together” to “amalgamation”
31. Suggest omitting the word “surgical”
32. I think you probably mean “new shared workplace”, unless the surgeons were actually living together.

33. The way this sentence is currently structured, it seems like you are saying that the new workplace forced the staff to overcome development of shared organizational and managerial arrangements. Suggest “…fragmentation of logistics. The new arrangement permitted the development of shared…”

34. Recommend starting a new sentence here.

35. The phrase “main point of focus” is redundant.

36. Unclear if this represents the same DRS system as you described earlier, or if it is another system that is unrelated with the same name.

37. The description of these trials is quite vague – I think the reader would benefit from more information.

38. Again, if this is the methods section, there is not a clear enough description of the logistics of your experiment. The reader should be able to learn what locations are included in the steps, what PDAs were used, what software was on the PDAs, what instruction was provided to the Nurses and the porters, how often the data was reviewed, if the study was reviewed by a research ethics board (or institutional review board), how the data were analyzed, etc.

39. This should be in the Methods section, not with the Results.

40. Suggest “…ORMS then generates outcomes by plotting the performance indicators against time (...) and then against organization (…).”

41. This would be better in a chart.

42. For a formal document like this, I think it is best to avoid writing in the first person.

43. It’s extremely important and interesting to note the cost of your initiative, especially to calculate return on investment, but if these numbers are not the result of the experiment, they should be in the introduction or discussion section, especially because you had these numbers prior to the experiment. Having them with your primary and secondary results is confusing.

44. It isn’t clear which section of the article this is.

45. Again, using the first-person is too informal for this writing style.

46. Suggest omitting this digression.

47. Spelling error – analysis.

48. This phrasing is too casual.

49. This sentence does not explain why the number of emergency procedures has decreased.

50. Which problem?

51. Cute, but not appropriate for publication.

52. I don’t think there has been enough support provided in the text to make this claim.
53. Was feedback from staff collected in a systematic way? Even if it wasn’t, if you would like to include this in your discussion, there should be some mention of how opinions were collected in the methods section, and the content of those opinions in the results section.

54. The International Ergonomics Association defines ergonomics as: the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a system, and the profession that applies theory, principles, data and methods to design in order to optimize human well-being and overall system performance. (http://iea.cc/01_what/What%20is%20Ergonomics.html)

55. This paragraph should be linked to the discussion of Ergonomics above.

56. This concluding sentence does not flow from your discussion

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests