Author's response to reviews

Title: Pay for performance: will dentistry follow?

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Natalie Pafitis MSc
The BioMed Central Editorial Team

Dear Mrs. Pafitis,

We are pleased to submit our revised manuscript entitled “Pay for performance: will dentistry follow?” (MS: 1860499611304354). We deeply appreciate the thoughtful review given to our manuscript. We provide below our responses to referee’s comments. To more easily identify all the changes made in the manuscript, we have provided a version that uses the “track changes” feature in the Microsoft Word.

Referee #2: Paul Batchelor

The authors have in my opinion substantially improved the paper and I would now recommend it for publication.

Thank you for your feedback and valuable comments to this manuscript.

The ‘Background’ section of the abstract could be considerably shortened. In my view the authors have identified that pay for performance measures have been adopted in the general health sector. This article provides an overview of the issues surrounding their adoption and how these might be applied to the dental sector.

Thank you for your suggestion. The Background section of the previous version had 967 words. Based on your comments, we shorten it to 674 words.

The ‘Discussion’ section of the abstract could also be shortened.

We agree with referee’s observation that this section might be too long. The previous version has 3,036 words. Per your suggestion, we reduced the Discussion section to 2,806 words. However, since this manuscript is not an empirical paper and has no data to summarize in graphs and tables, a longer than usual discussion is needed to cover the main points of the debate. We could educe the Discussion section further, if necessary, but we believe that a shorter section will negatively impact the clarity and flow of the argument.

On page 12, I think e reordering to the first two sentences would strengthen the point made: the issue I think the authors are trying to make centres on the identification of factors within the profession of which membership of a professional association is one.
Thank you for your observation. We changed the first sentences of the paragraph to read “Both dentists in the community and dental organizations may be substantially affected by the implementation of any P4P program. Consequently, professional organizations have a direct interest in P4P initiatives.”

On page 14 the authors use the word ‘provision’ of care in the first sentence. I think the phrase ‘treatment modalities’ is more appropriate. Provision of care is a wider concept and given the nature of dental care may well be explainable. The issue is more about for a particular condition what do individuals end up receiving.

Thank you, your suggestion is highly appreciated. We replaced the words “provision of care” to “dental treatment modalities” in this version of the manuscript.

In their final comment, that covering data, the authors’ valid points could be strengthened by the need to ensure that data were both valid and reproducible. Data collection per se won’t improve matters unless they accurately measure what is present. Indeed, the authors’ comments on claims data to some extent highlight the problem.

The reviewer makes an excellent point in noting that data validity and reliability are extremely important. Therefore, on page 20 of our revised manuscript we state that: “Another important issues in developing outcome indicators are the availability of valid, reliable treatment information and the cost of data collection. Data is valuable as long as it accurately measure clinical reality i.e. actual oral health status, risk factors, diagnoses, treatment, and side effects. Currently, many dental offices use paper records and collect electronic data only for reimbursement purposes.”

These issues apart, the authors are to be congratulated on their work and the changes made from the earlier version.

Thank you for your feedback.

The number of words in the main text decreased from 4,139 improved as a result of its peer review, and we are very appreciative to 3,612 in the current version.

Thank you very much for your review. Our manuscript has been considerably

With regards,

Andreea Voinea-Griffin, DDS, MBA, MSHA, FACHE