Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of electronic patient record use on mortality in End Stage Renal Disease, a model chronic disease: retrospective analysis of 8 years of prospectively collected data

Version: 2 Date: 16 July 2007

Reviewer: Eric Pan

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a very interesting article. The authors examined the impact of an "electronic patient record" system on the outcome of patient care in ESRD. This is an important study of the longterm impact of information systems on patient outcome. However, more background and prior works should be included to present a proper perspective for the readers.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

The authors claimed that this is the first demonstration of a system of this type having a favorable effect on the outcomes and cost in chronic disease. This is most likely due to the authors searching for impacts of "electronic patient records" where as many researchers would classify a system of this type as a "disease registry." The key distinction between electronic medical records (EMRs) or electronic health records (EHRs) versus disease registry is that of general clinical purpose versus single/multiple disease focuse. Where as in the past, many disease registries were simplistic in design and could not be used for patient care, many modern disease registries are similar to the system presented in this paper in that they had been expanded in functionality to enable clinical care and documentation while remaining (single-)disease focused, and therefore still considered "disease registries".

Therefore, I would strongly recommend that the authors improve on the prior works coverage by examining/reporting on similar works done under the classification of "disease registries". I am sure even with this coverage, this research will remain important in the field, while enhancing a reader’s appreciation for all the prior works.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**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 recently collaborated in research with the Disease Management Association of America. However, I did not receive any financial compensation from any competing interests.