Reviewer's report

Title: Benchmarking of hospital information systems: Monitoring of discharge letters and scheduling can reveal heterogeneities and time trends

Version: 1 Date: 20 September 2007

Reviewer: Alfred Winter

Reviewer's report:

General

Even if the approach is not completely new (see below), the topic is important enough to be reported and it will be helpful for the readers to find the additional new aspects and ideas of this paper here.

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

1. You should more precisely define, what you mean by the term HIS. What part of the functions to be supported by the information system of a hospital is actually supported by your installation of ORBIS?

2. p.4 "measured time to switch users": What part of the action has been measured? Have user interactions been incorporated or not?

3. p.5, second paragraph: You should more precisely define this calculation. Did you divide the number of discharge letters by the average number of appointments? It would be more reliable and informative if you would divide the number of discharge letters by the actual number of cases documented in the specialty within the time range you counted the number of letters.

4. p.7, chapter "Scheduling": This chapter should be rewritten according to the following notes:

4.1 I do not understand the diagram in Figure 6. Do the columns stand for the frequency of an interval? How are the intervals defined? Where can I find the "average numbers" in the diagram?

4.2 "it becomes evident...": This is not evident to me. Please help readers to derive this conclusion from Figure 6.

4.3 "This is influenced by ...": What is the reason for this conclusion?

5. There is a disproportion concerning the length of the chapters Methods/Results at one hand and the chapter Discussion at the other hand. Methods and Results need a more elaborate and precise description.


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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. p. 6, last paragraph: consider to use boxplots for either parameter to be able to compare situation in different specialities.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.