Author's response to reviews

Title: Comparison of different comorbidity measures for use with administrative data in predicting short- and long-term mortality

Authors:

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Version: 4 Date: 15 April 2010

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February 20, 2010

Melissa Norton, M.D.
Editor-in-Chief, *BMC Health Services*

Dear Dr. Norton,
Thanks for your e-mail on March 3, 2010 regarding our manuscript MS: 6990569582959496. According to the reviewer and editor’s valuable comments, we have responded below to the individual reviewer comments. Please feel free to contact us directly if we can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

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Note: We have copied the reviewers’ statements verbatim and attached our responses below each point.
Response to reviewer 1

Reviewer: Ronald Lagoe

Thanks very much!

Response to reviewer 2

Reviewer: Uzor C. Ogbu

Minor Essential Revisions

Q1. The Methods section is vastly improved but can still be made more succinct and understandable.
   A1. Thank you for your suggestion. We have revised the methods section.

Q2. The first paragraph of the results section appears to compare the AMI population to the COPD population. This does not seem to be a useful comparison given the significant differences in treatment protocols for the two conditions.
   A2. Thank you for your suggestion. We revised the first paragraph of the results section. We described the characteristics of the two populations and did not compare them to each other (p.11).

Q3. The authors may wish to incorporate a portion of their response to my initial query about the reasons behind the use of the different comorbidity measures in the existing literature.
   A3. Thank you for your suggestion. We have added the reasons behind the use of the different comorbidity measures in the forth paragraph of the introduction (p.4).

Q4. The authors note a difference in the quality of the database as a limitation but say they had no missing data. Perhaps they could expand on what they mean by stating this as a limitation.
   A4. Thank you for your suggestion. We have expanded the section on limitation and added the reference (p.16).

Q5. The authors should thoroughly proofread the article paying particular attention to the consistency of tenses and wording.
   A5. Thank you for your suggestion. The manuscript was proofread.
Q6. The authors should explain/justify the designation of aborigine for the benefit of a wider audience that might not be familiar with the use or implications of the term in Asia.

A6. Thank you for your suggestion. We have added additional references regarding Taiwanese aborigines (p.9).

Discretionary revisions
Q. In the first row of Table 2, the authors use the section sign (§) to denote "Not applicable". It might be clearer if the used N/A and added the explanation as a footnote.

A. Thank you for your suggestion. We have revised the first row of table 2 (p.22).