Reviewer's report

Title: Patient related factors in frequent readmissions: the influence of condition, access to services and patient choice.

Version: 3 Date: 14 May 2010

Reviewer: Judith Savageau

Reviewer's report:

Major issues:

The authors, again, do a good job responding to the comments from both reviewers. Their response letter outlines well their revisions as well as their rationale for making or not making changes as suggested. They have very much re-vamped this paper with a new focus on re-admissions rather than identifying the characteristics of frequency attenders. However, I have 2 issues that I believe need to be addressed:

• The Introduction seems unusually long at this stage. There are numerous places where the authors discuss their aims and objectives within various paragraphs of the Introduction as they review the literature citing gaps and controversies. It would be easier for the reader if their overall aims/goals/objectives for this study were presented just at the end of the Introduction as is typically written. The Introduction would then be a bit less choppy in their current review of the literature given the new focus of the paper.

• I am a bit confused by the new approach to the analysis in the identification and inclusion of independent variables. The authors do say that they have used an ‘enter all’ rationale for their logistic regression runs, but the rationale seems very weak without making a case for including non-significant variables unless they feel strongly that one needs to ‘control for’ such issues as being foreign born, seasonality, day/shift of entry to ED, etc. Given the admittedly low percent of variance explained by the variables significant in the model (which they justify and can explain relatively well), it seems, for the sake of parsimony, that there really isn’t a need to keep in so many additional independent variables (even though their sample size would support this) without a justification for not using a forward stepwise or backward elimination approach in deriving a final model. This should be better explained in the paper or the LR tables should be presented without those variables – especially the ones that are ‘not’ significant in either of the 2 models.

Thank you for the opportunity to re-review this paper.

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.