Reviewer's report

Title: Socioeconomic inequalities in health services utilization in Brazil according to health care need: Evidences from the World Health Survey

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Reviewer: Barbara Starfield

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This paper reports encouraging news regarding equity of health services in Brasil: there is no difference in use of services across the social gradient for people in poorer health.

However, some important issues have not been addressed, as follows:

1. What is the likely value of the 'excess' services used by those in good health? The limitations of more and more (and excessive) prevention are becoming increasingly evident and deserve attention.

2. What is the relative extent of use of primary care versus specialty services? Could the 'excess' used by those in good health possibly be related to unnecessary specialist services? Is it possible to distinguish specialist from primary care services received?

3. Is it possible to discern the role of private versus public services use? Are there differences in private versus public services, or type of insurance among those with good versus poor health and might some of the findings be related to these differences?

4. Income and education have different types of influences on use of services; the former particularly influence use for illness whereas the latter preferentially influence preventive care. Some discussion of this (with data if possible) would be useful.

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 declare that I have no competing interests.