Reviewer's report

Title: An economic appraisal of the Australian Medical Sheepskin for the prevention of sacral pressure ulcers from a nursing home perspective

Version: 1 Date: 21 April 2010

Reviewer: Roger Chafe

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Pressure ulcers are clearly an important issue for the health care sector, from both the nursing home and acute care perspectives. Given that many decision makers look at such problems from a cost-saving perspective, I find the general approach taken by the authors to be reasonable, but the work needs to be put in a clearer context of previous work on this topic.

A short description needs to be included about how the Australian Medical Sheepskin (AMS) work, for those who are not familiar with this intervention. There is also the issue of the role of AMS in treatment of pressure ulcers, rather than just in their prevention which should be discussed.

One area of concern which the authors need to further discuss is the discrepancy between their costs for treating a pressure ulcer with the cost estimates used in other studies, e.g., Bennett. This is partly related to increased costs associated with transfers to acute care or the longer stays in hospital for patients with pressure ulcers. Although not a direct cost to the nursing home, these costs may be of relevance to payers that are responsible for a patients’ nursing home and acute care costs. The possible implications of these additional costs should be discussed. Defending the author’s calculation of the cost of preventing a pressure ulcer is important, because I think it is likely the point which will be initially noticed by readers with knowledge of this area.

With regard to the calculation of the cost of treatment, while it is acceptable to use €15 / €17 per day as the mean treatment cost, I think the high and low inputs for the sensitivity analysis should reflect the high and low values identified in Table 4.

The model described in the article relies on one RCT. The authors should provide more details about that trial and its possible weaknesses. The results of the other two trials on AMS referenced by the authors should also be discussed, and if possible, incorporated into the sensitivity analysis.