Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic review: outcomes, mechanisms, and context of pay-for-performance in health care

Version: 1 Date: 18 April 2010

Reviewer: Anne Frølich

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In the Result section the authors should address the strength of reported results based on study design, significance of results, etc.

- Minor Essential Revisions

- Discretionary Revisions

1. Page 8: I have a clarifying question to the sentence “The effect of P4P ranged from negative or absent to positive or very positive depending on the target and program.” It is not clear what positive means and what is the difference between positive and very positive.

2. Page 8: The sentence “For preventive care, we found more conflicting results for screening targets and immunization targets.” This sentence makes me question what was the target of the interventions referred to in the just mentioned sentence above “The effect of P4P ranged from negative or absent to positive or very positive depending on the target and program.”?

3. Page 9: The section: Mechanism findings

The authors should clarify the heading “Mechanism findings” another wording may better express what the authors describe and include in this section.

4. Page 10: The section Quality measurement, The sentence “With regard to quality measurement, differences in data collection methods did not lead to substantial differences in P4P results.” The authors should mention the data collection methods referred to.

5. Page 11:

The section starting with; “In the UK, P4P was not introduced in a stepwise fashion. References to the three sentences of this section would be valuable.

6. Page 15:

The section “Patient characteristics” The authors should also describe how patient characteristics such as gender, socioeconomically status, ethnicity and insurance coverage or not affect P4P.
7. Page 19: It is not clear how the authors reached the 3 recommendations given after the sentence and this should be explained, “The following recommendations are theory based but at present show absent or conflicting evidence:

**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.