Reviewer's report

**Title:** Responses of Massachusetts Hospitals to a State Mandate to Collect Race, Ethnicity and Language Data from Patients: A Qualitative Study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 6 October 2010

**Reviewer:** Min-Woong Sohn

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This is a qualitative study based on data obtained from semi-structured interviews with executives of 28 Massachusetts (MA) hospitals. Its objectives were to explore the concerns about implementing the MA regulation requiring MA hospitals to collect race, ethnicity, and language data and to assess its impact on the use of race/ethnicity data.

Study findings indicate (1) that there were many concerns about and barriers to systematically collecting and using race/ethnicity data among MA hospitals after the implementation of the regulation, (2) that after two years of the regulation there were fewer concerns than anticipated, and (3) that its impact on the use of race/ethnicity data for performance monitoring and quality improvement has been substantial.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. The paper can be improved if it specifically focuses on the impact of the regulation. The third finding is the most important and interesting. But the first two add very little to the existing body of literature on the difficulties/barriers in collecting race/ethnicity data.
2. The description of the impact can be improved if it is supported by a tabular list of the data use.
3. The paper could use a separate subsection on the barriers to the use of race/ethnicity data (now it is part of the subsection on Impact).
4. A list of frequently mentioned barriers to the use of race/ethnicity data would also be helpful.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**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.