Reviewer's report

Title: Comparing public and private hospitals in China: evidence from Guangdong

Version: 2 Date: 14 September 2009

Reviewer: Beverley Copnell

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript has been substantially revised and is much improved as a result. All my major concerns have been addressed by the revision. I have a few minor suggestions to improve clarity.

1. In the text (page 9) mortality rate is defined as 'the average number of patients who die during inpatient admission' which suggests an absolute figure per hospital rather than a number relative to the total number of admissions (i.e. the number of deaths per x admissions), and is different to the table. Please clarify. Further to this point, in the table mortality rate is apparently calculated as deaths per admission, and thus the numbers are extremely small (even zero in some cases). It is more usual, and renders the numbers more meaningful, to use deaths per 1000 admissions.

2. page 12, discussion of limitation of unadjusted mortality: this point has been well documented and it would be appropriate to provide at least 1 reference.

3. In the footnotes to tables 3 and 4, it is not clear what is meant by 'all dependent variables are analysed in ln(.) form'.

4. I found table 3 difficult to follow. I deduce that each of the columns contains the results of a multiple regression equation for each of 4 separate outcomes, and that the numbers in the cells are the coefficients, but this is not entirely clear at first. Perhaps the table could be reorganised to make it clearer. It is also usual to provide 95% confidence intervals around the coefficient.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests