Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Development of a Modelling and Simulation Method Comparison and Selection Framework for Health Services Management

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 29 September 2010

**Reviewer:** Kathy Kotiadis

**Reviewer’s report:**

The paper ‘Developing a modelling and simulation method comparison and selection framework for health services management’ puts forward interesting research but it feels like it has been written for an OR audience rather than the typical reader of health service research. The paper requires re-writing/re-focussing to meet its full potential and fit with the readership of the journal. I recommend the following Major Compulsory Revisions:

The story being told is confused with a lot of redundant information (or too much detail) detracting from the contribution and as a result the reader remains confused. I also believe it lacks a consistent central message that would be appealing to this HSR audience. This central message could be ‘a comparison and selection framework of health care operational needs has been developed through a process of …..’. This seems to be the one put forward at the bottom of page 4. However you are selling the simulation angle but the tool appears to provide much more than simulation.

The title is a little unattractive for this audience and should be changed. It could be changed to: Development of a method selection tool for health service management.

**Abstract Corrections:**

The abstract needs to be more focus with key messages coming through without repetition. More specifically the second sentence needs to be rephrased and the motivation needs to come through stronger (why do health care managers or health analysts need the framework? To commission work? To help them consider the method options at the start of the project?)

The first sentence of the results brings to mind the question of 28 methods of what? I also think this part of the methods. The product set out (to some extent) in the conclusions should be set out in the results. Your findings are the product (framework). Is the framework a tool? Why not call it that as it would make it more appealing.

The methods and results do not fit together or do not briefly explain the research described later in the paper.

The conclusion should reflect the contribution on policy and practice, which it sort of does but not enough (perhaps consider the ideas you put forward in your discussion section).
Background section corrections:
The section on the background should be re-written so that the following key messages (story) come through with ease:
The management and evaluations of health services can be achieved through OR
OR can deal with problems such as …. And examples of benefits of OR used in health care
However OR has many methods, techniques and tools and selecting the most appropriate would be difficult even for an OR expert. Because…
Then put forward your contribution…..which can be found in part in the paper’s conclusions.

Methods section corrections:
This section is far too long with too much detail and written in some sections for an OR person. I also believe that a diagram of the development process would help considerably and could be used to structure the conversation.

Discussion section corrections:
In this section of the paper again it is not considering the audience (health care and probably non-OR). I think some subheadings of ‘limitations’ and ‘extensions to the research’ would help structure the section.
Also has anyone used the framework to commission any study or work? How can one have access to this tool? it is not clear if the framework is easy for a non-OR person to use in practice?
I would recommend also putting in this section the feedback section found in the methods.
The contribution of the paper should be supported by HSR literature (e.g. difficulties in evidence based management).
In addition to these main section comments, there are a few sentences in the paper that are not clear and the reader is forced to read them a few times to make sense of them. I have not concentrated on these as they may be removed in a future draft.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

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'