Reviewer’s report

Title: The effect of health care system reform on cataract surgery and intraocular lens selection in Chongqing, China

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Reviewer: Susan Lewallen

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting description of changes underway in Chongqing, but the exact question that the authors want to answer is not very clear to me.

The authors state that the question they wished to answer was: Does medical reform influence patients with cataract? This is a very broad question and the study described is not really designed to answer it. The authors collected data and described the proportion of both urban and rural cataract patients who have insurance; it increase each year and is significantly greater in urban than rural residents until 2008, but what does this mean?

Naturally the number of people undergoing cataract surgery who had insurance increased over the years but this is to be expected as insurance was rolled out. Numbers of people undergoing other procedures with insurance probably increased too.

Authors also demonstrate that total numbers of cataract surgeries being done is increasing each year but there may be multiple factors responsible for this, medical insurance availability being only one of them. It stands to reason that increased availability of medical insurance makes it easier for patients to receive cataract surgery but these data do not test nor prove this hypothesis.

Demonstrating that an increasing proportion of those undergone cataract surgery have medical insurance each year is NOT the same as demonstrating that people with insurance are more likely to accept than people without insurance; we know nothing at all about how many people in each group refused surgery.

Other minor problems:

1. Several statements are made with inadequate reference. For example “poverty is the main barrier to accessing cataract surgery” is not referenced and the statement that 2.5 million or cataract blind is referenced by a paper from 1999.
2. Selection criteria for the 8 hospitals is not clear.

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.