Reviewer's report

Title: Using routine data to monitor inequalities in an acute trust: a retrospective study

Version: 2 Date: 18 February 2012

Reviewer: Jonathan Cox

Reviewer's report:

The authors have thoroughly attempted to address reviewer's comments and the paper is now much improved. There is much greater clarity of the research question and the focus on measuring inequality is now made clear.

Discretionary Revisions

Abstract – results 2nd sentence “There was little evidence of... 80 analyses” does not make sense
Abstract – conclusions “This study found...” small inequalities were found but not statistically significant inequalities.
Background 4th para “It is important to establish to what extent national patterns” why is this important and what national patterns are you referring to?
Background 5th para “we measured inequalities in process (waiting times, LoS)...” waiting times are not processes but indicators of access
Procedures & database inclusions “These procedures were chosen in discussion...” in your comments you state that bariatric surgery was not one of the most common but it is rapidly increasing in volume. Is that why you state it is important?
Measures of inequalities “This study explored variations...” you used access, process and outcome measures.
There is no point in using the Charlson index when you have just dichotomized the variable. You could have just done this from HES data.
Data analysis 2nd para. “MLR used to adjust for the other socio-demographic variables...” Which other? Not clear what is meant here.

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.