Author's response to reviews

Title: Timing of surgery for hip fracture and in-hospital mortality. A retrospective population-based cohort study in the Spanish National Health System.

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MS: 1546736131528395
Title: Timing of surgery for hip fracture and in-hospital mortality. A retrospective population-based cohort study in the Spanish National Health System.

Valencia (Spain), December 21, 2011

Dear Editor,

Please find enclosed the revised version of our manuscript “Timing of surgery for hip fracture and in-hospital mortality. A retrospective population-based cohort study in the Spanish National Health System.” (MS: 1546736131528395), submitted for your consideration for publication in BMC Health Services Research.

In response to the new suggestions expressed by the referee, we have made the following changes:

Reviewer #2 (Reijo Sund): Excellent work with revisions! I have no further comments except for a few optional revisions:

[Reviewer #2 #01]. 1) In discussing the implications of the study you state that "early surgery" should not be used as a quality indicator (in Spain), but may work as an efficiency indicator. I see your point, but taking into account that there were huge variation in proportions of "early surgery" between hospitals and surprisingly low average "early surgery" proportion (much lower than "acceptable"), I would say that from an international point of view there seems to be a "need" for quality improvement in Spain (not in terms of mortality but in terms of good practices in identifying patients that can (or cannot) be operated early. Maybe you want to comment on that in the manuscript?

We agree with the reviewer. We have changed this paragraph according with the reviewer comment.

[Reviewer #2 #02]. 2) Maybe you could still add some additional explanations to tables (or their captions). For example, in Table 1 first percentage column is % of all patients ("vertical"), but the second percentage group is early n per all n ("horizontal"). Another example in Table 4 is that n refers to total number of patients in the corresponding group and NOT the number of died patients in the group. Such "inconsistencies" may confuse and make the reading of tables unnecessarily clumsy.

We have changed tables and/or tables captions according with the reviewer comment.

[Reviewer #2 #03]. 3) Check the manuscript and especially additional files once more for typos. For example, in additional file 3: "lineal" should (probably) be "linear" and the first sentence in the last text paragraph (starting with "Because hospitals when (nearly) all patients...") is difficult to understand.

We have revised the manuscript and additional files for correcting typographic errors (these changes are not underlined in yellow in the manuscript)
We have revised the entire manuscript in accordance with the journal’s style. We very much appreciate the comments made by the referee.

Thank you for your interest in our paper. Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further clarification.

Yours sincerely,

Salvador Peiró, MD PhD
On behalf of all the authors