Author's response to reviews

Title: Standardizing admission and discharge processes to improve patient flow: A cross sectional study.

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Author’s response to reviews: see over
Dear Mr. Morrey,

Following your instructions, I took into account all the comments of the referees and the rest of the editorial comments and added the corrections in a revised manuscript which I have uploaded in the web. In addition, in this letter there are the details, point-by-point, to the concerns as requested.

Referee 1:

Major compulsory Revisions:

1-Which type of patients/patients groups are included in the different performance measures:

As the authors indicated in their reply, some of the results have changed. At the moment it is still not always clear to me what the numbers represent (or which patient groups are included). For instance, in the Results section the total number of admissions is 27,784 and 28,577 for 2007 and 2009, respectively. Dividing by 365 (or 365.25) yields about 76 and 78 admissions per day on average for 2007 and 2009. How do these numbers relate to Table 2 (with, e.g., 59 scheduled admissions, 36 emergency admissions and 13 day surgery admissions for 2007)? Moreover, the numbers in Table 2 indicate that far more than 50 percent involve non-emergency admissions. Another point of confusion might be whether day surgery is included or not.

We have included a new variable in table 2, Scheduled hospital admissions that complements the previous All scheduled admissions (including day surgery)*. The median number of admissions is 45.50 and 47 in years 2007 and 2009, respectively, while the mean number of scheduled admissions is 37 in year 2007 and 39 in year 2009 approximately, according to the numbers given in the results section (third line: “The number of patient admissions for scheduled surgery was 13,824 patients in 2007 and 14,548 patients in 2009.”).

Table 2 suggest that day surgery patients are regarded as a separate category, whereas day surgery seems to be included in the global length of stay in Table 3 (based on combining the numbers with the previous version of the manuscript). This might be fine, but it would be of great help to the reader if the authors indicate which types of patients are considered in the different performance measures.

In the previous version of the manuscript we used means to describe the variable length of stay. The other reviewer recommended to change the analysis into a Mann Whitney Test and median with IQR. Besides the results appear to be quite different they are the same information. In order to be clearer we added (without day surgery, days) in the variables: Global length of stay and Scheduled patient length of stay in table 3.

Minor Comments:

1- In the second paragraph of the abstract it seems that ‘the median patients’ global length of stay’ should be ‘the average patients’ global length of stay’ (or mean). I am not aware of the Spanish situation, but a median of about 8 days seems excessively long.
These are the results and they are presented as medians. It is a high technology hospital and this length of stay is considered as quite good. The hospital has good results for most of the DRG’s when adjusted by complexity and comorbidity.

2- In Table 3, should ‘70%’ and ‘87%’ for Same day of surgery admission (2007) and Discharge planning (2009) have decimals as well?

We have added the decimals

3- There is a space required between ‘to’ and ‘78’ for Daily patients placed out of service (2007).

We have added the space.

Referee 2:

No changes required.

Editorial Requests:

1-Acknowledgements
Please list the source(s) of funding for the study, for each author, and for the manuscript preparation in the acknowledgements section. Authors must describe the role of the funding body, if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript; and in the decision to submit the manuscript for publication

We added the sentence, in the acknowledgements section: “No funding was received by any of the authors for this study or preparation of the manuscript”.

Looking forward to your response,

Yours faithfully,

Berta Ortiga