Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of in-home and community-based services on the functional status of elderly in the long-term care insurance system in Japan.

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Reviewer: Soonman Kwons

Reviewer's report:

One of the key issues in long-term care insurance (LTCI) is whether it can contribute to the improvement in functional status. Thus, this paper is of very high policy importance.

I think the authors need to add variables of some basic socio-economic status of elderly people in the model. Education level may not be an important variable for functional status of very old people, but income level (e.g., if the old person is on public assistance) can be a factor affecting the change in functional status.

Although the authors say that VIF shows no sign of multicollinearity, some variables seem closely related to each other. For example, ‘length of stay in LTCI system’ and ‘amount of LTCI services’ are correlated (conceptually).

The authors provide two possible explanations to the weak impacts of the LTC service on the change in functional status. I think the first reason is more important. The category of functional status used in the paper is the classification adopted by the LTCI for the purpose of determining eligibility. So it can be a crude measure and detects only a big change in functional status, or it is not sensitive enough to catch even a reasonable degree of the change in functional status.

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