Author's response to reviews

Title: How does lean work in emergency care? A case study of a lean-inspired intervention at the Astrid Lindgren Children's Hospital, Stockholm, Sweden.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Handling Editor,

We hereby submit the following Original Research Paper to your journal:

How does lean work in emergency care?

A case study of a lean-inspired intervention at the Astrid Lindgren Children’s Hospital, Stockholm, Sweden.

by Pamela Mazzocato, Richard J. Holden, Mats Brommels, Håkan Aronsson, Ulrika Bäckman, Mattias Elg, and Johan Thor.

The management of health services and organizations is an area where concepts, techniques and procedures often are borrowed from other industries. “Lean” is one such management concept which has become widely adopted.

In recently published literature reviews (Mazzocato et al., “Lean thinking in healthcare: a realist review of the literature, in Quality and Safety in Health Care 2010 and RJ Holden, "Lean thinking in emergency departments: A critical review” in Annals of Emergency Medicine 2011) we showed that there is still limited knowledge of how and why lean interventions succeed (or fail to succeed). To add such knowledge, we conducted the present in-depth case study that examines the application of lean-inspired changes in a pediatric Accident and Emergency department.

A lean program contains many principles, tools, and practices. We used four lean principles to demonstrate how the changes in practice implemented by the case organization triggered improvement. We also identified factors that prevented performance from being improved even more.
Our study provides a useful framework to enable health care organizations and managers to pick the right components of a lean program and to better understand the reasons behind lean’s success (or failure).

Some initial results of this article were presented at EurOMA (European Operations Management Association) – Porto, Portugal. The work has not been published and is not being considered for publication elsewhere.

To help the review process we suggest the following reviewers:

Eric W Dickson MD  
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Lead author of three reviewed studies, including one in Annals of Emergency Medicine (2009;54(4):504-10)

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Author of one reviewed paper, several abstracts on Lean in the ED, and the volume Emergency Medicine: A Learning Guide.

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Larry D Gamm PhD  
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Author of recent review of Lean (and other approaches) in US health care and author of a conceptual paper relating lean to quality of care.

Zoe Radnor PhD  
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Author of several reviewed papers about Lean in the public sector in the UK.
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