Reviewer's report

**Title:** The use of rehabilitation among patients with breast cancer: A retrospective longitudinal cohort study

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 22 May 2012

**Reviewer:** Nicole Stout

**Reviewer's report:**

Manuscript Review:
The use of rehabilitation among patients with breast cancer: A retrospective longitudinal cohort study.

General comments to the authors:
This manuscript identifies the trend in utilization of rehabilitation among a cohort of patients diagnosed with breast cancer. The authors present retrospective data obtained from a National Health Insurance database over a 4 year period. The findings reported portray the overall rate of utilization of rehabilitation services after breast cancer treatment and the change in utilization of those services over time. This manuscript is an important contribution to the literature in that it identifies the trend in intensity of service delivery and tracks change over time. To date, no other paper presents rehabilitation utilization patterns using such a large dataset. Furthermore, the severity/intensity model described in this paper is an important concept that is newly emerging in other parts of the world. (ref http://ptjournal.apta.org/content/early/2011/09/15/ptj.20110042.abstract ) This paper lends important support to the need for therapy services over time, but also the need for variance in the intensity of therapy services based on the severity of the condition.

Specific comments:

Methods Section:
- Under patient demographics you speak to 2 different groups; rehabilitation users and non-users. You should note earlier in the manuscript, perhaps in the study samples paragraph, that there were 2 groups. The overall 632 patients who were registered were divided into 2 subgroups; those who used rehabilitation and those who did not.
- Page 4, line 29, it is unclear what the “insured unit” is referring to. Please specify what group you are referring to.

Discussion Section:
- Page 6, line 9: This paragraph reports on the demographic data of your patients and would be better suited in the results section and more concisely discussed here.
- Page 6, line 25: There is reference to inadequacy of information provided to
patients. There are several references that could be used here, consider: Binkley et al 2012 Cancer http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cncr.27469/pdf

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests