Reviewer's report

Title: Willingness to use and pay for options of care for community-dwelling older people in rural Vietnam

Version: 3 Date: 8 November 2011

Reviewer: Darryl Wieland

Reviewer's report:

The subject manuscript reports a population-based study of the willingness to use [WTU] and pay [WTP] for three different forms of (presently unavailable) community-based geriatric care among a large sample of elderly people and their household members in a rural district of Vietnam. The survey research was supplemented with four focus group discussions with elderly, their household members, and community association representatives to explore perspectives on service use.

The most salient findings are not surprising as they have been often observed in research elsewhere: (1) WTU well exceeds WTP for formal services, and there is apparent price elasticity of demand for all three service types for both elders and household respondents; (2) householders generally expect to use more of the identified formal services for their elderly members than do elders themselves; (3) elderly people are more WTP/WTU home-delivered services (here, “mobile team care”) than day or nursing center services (defined as residential care for shorter or longer term stays), where householders are more WTP for day care and nursing center services; and (4) WTU/WTP for services is affected by a variety of demographic and socioeconomic factors.

Minor revisions:

Last sentence, abstract, p. 3 – statement is unclear.

Background, 2nd paragraph, p. 4 – There are several ways to calculate old-age dependency ratios, and some readers will not understand how you have presented them here, so it would be well to explain its construction very briefly, as was done for the Vietnamese ageing index.

Background, 1st full paragraph, p. 5 – Without adding much lengthy material, please explain why rural elderly can rely less on social security. Is it because rural elderly were less likely to have paid into the social insurance system? Also, 2nd paragraph of the page – are the “social subsidies” that are more common in rural areas income support for the poor (e.g., welfare payments)?

Background, 1st full paragraph, p. 6 – Having pulled the cited paper (#20), I was unable to find evidence the HRQoL (specifically, the EQ-5D index) increases at old age in these rural areas, since the sample comprised people >= 60 years. Further, despite combing through reference #20, I am unable to discern what is
meant by the statement “Economic conditions affect HRQoL through sensory rather than physical roles (or utilities, as given in #20).”

Background, 2nd paragraph, last sentence, p. 6 – Does a higher elderly health score on the cited questionnaire imply better health? If so, better to say so.

Methods, 2nd paragraph, last sentence, p. 11 – “Correction of data-entry errors was made…”

Results, 2nd paragraph, last sentence, p. 16 – “Those who were more dependent…”

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