Reviewer's report

Title: Utilization and Cost of a New Model of Care for Managing Acute Knee Injuries: the Calgary Acute Knee Injury Clinic

Version: 2 Date: 10 October 2012

Reviewer: Lynsey Willenberg

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Major revisions

1. As this is a quasi-experimental study, one of the main limitations to this study, which was not highlighted, is selection bias. As the study participants did not represent a random sample, selection bias exists. The measure of frequency or association is likely to be different in the subjects selected for the study compared to the source population.

2. The results show a very high dropout rate in the study: <50%. Please consider analysing the difference between the missing data and the non-missing data. This will help convince the reader that the results are valid. Was any follow-up done on participants? If not, please include in the limitations. It is possible that the participant’s treatment experience that didn’t return the questionnaire is different to those participants that did complete the questionnaire.

Minor Revisions

1. In the methods section, when describing the eligibility criteria, there was no mention of age in years included or excluded? Does that mean that all ages were included in the study?

2. Please clarify how the study was conducted. It is not clear how or who administered the questionnaire and how the data was collected.

3. In the methods section, ‘all cost estimates were calculated in Canadian dollars (CAD$).’ Were these costs inflated?

4. In the data analysis, please define what statistical significance you used for the
analysis.

5. To keep consistency, please provide a % …'data was analysed from 138 questionnaires'.

6. In table 1, the percentages do not add up to 100%. For example, the Martial status proportions only add up to 56.8%. Were there other categories considered? Single? Unknown? It is a bit confusing. The proportions for Income do not add up either. What was the proportion for people who earned less than $60,000?

7. Following on from the above comment, the left hand column of the table should explain what is in the corresponding row of each group. For example, Male (%) does not clearly explain the data in that row as there are two numbers displayed. After the variable perhaps write n (%). It will better explain the reader what the values in the corresponding row represent.

8. In table 2 and 3, please consider inserting a column before the p value of the mean differences between the groups and separating the p value and 95% CI into two different columns. It is unclear as to whether the 95% CI relates to the p value or the mean differences in table 2 and 3.

9. The title in table 3 does not relate to what the table describes. It would be clearer if it read, ‘The cost difference for patients in the experimental group and the comparison group.’

10. In table 4, please reconsider how you explain the variables sex, race and marital status. The pearson correlation test of significance represents a linear relationship between the variables. Considering these variables are nominal and not continuous, the p value could be interpreted incorrectly.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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