Reviewer's report

Title: Cost-effectiveness of a health-social partnership transitional program for post-discharge medical patients

Version: 3 Date: 27 August 2012

Reviewer: Kylie Wales

Reviewer's report:

Title: Cost effectiveness of a health-social partnership transitional program for post-discharge medical patients

Version: 1

Reviewer: Kylie Wales

Reviewers report: Major compulsory revisions

General comments.
Authors often refer that this study will be a ‘proper’ review of cost effectiveness. What really is proper? I feel this point needs to be explained further rather than being referred to as proper. The overall paper is well written, however, the authors would benefit from further description of their intervention.

Type of revisions

Answers to specific questions:

Is the question posed by authors well defined? Yes the question is well defined. I understand that the authors have another publication relating to the study intervention program. I felt that further definition of why the transitional care program was expected to reduce hospital admission rates should still be made in this paper. I have noted the description (under randomized controlled trial section) of the study intervention and control group, however I found this difficult to understand and felt it lacked specific information. I had questions relating to types of goals set, whether referrals would be made, was a home modification assessment completed or equipment assessment completed etc. I feel that further qualification would help the reader to understand the depth of the intervention which in turn assists in understanding the time taken by staff to run the study, expected outcomes and hence the associated costs.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?

- Cost and Healthcare outcomes. Could the authors describe why they adjusted for age etc?
- Pre-program cost. Was there a standard training time or did volunteers and staff record their time?
- Program cost: again was there a standard time or did staff record time?
- Healthcare costs: Did authors include Accident and Emergency presentations that did not lead to an admission in hospital? Since the cost is $820.00 this
seems like a significant event to include?
- Healthcare costs: Can the authors describe why unit cost was used rather than actual cost (expect cost for patient admitted with asthma would be different to someone admitted with cardiac failure)? E.g. was that information not available via hospital records?
- Ethics: should be moved to earlier in the methods section
- Cost-effectiveness analysis- information should be provided regarding why the bootstrap method was used over others such as the Fieller’s method. Bootstrap method should be referenced.
- Cost effectiveness – can you describe why 28 days and 84 days readmission was used?
Are the data sound? Yes. However further description of choice of analysis methods would be beneficial.
Does the manuscript adhere to relevant standard for reporting data and deposition? Yes
Are the limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes
Do the authors acknowledge any work upon which they are building both published and unpublished?
- Background: Authors provide a thorough overview of the literature. Could the authors describe why they have omitted published work relating to discharge planning such as the systematic review by Shephered et al., 2010?
- Discussion: A number of studies are brought up in the discussion – but there is not a clear identification of which of these studies are transitional based or which are community based only. I feel this link needs to be stronger to show how the authors are building upon already published/unpublished data.
Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
Yes.

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' below.