Reviewer’s report

Title: The Effects of Oral Clefts on Hospital Use throughout the Lifespan

Version: 1 Date: 7 November 2011

Reviewer: Sheree Boulet

Reviewer’s report:

This is a very well-written manuscript that addresses an important gap in the current literature regarding the health impact of oral clefts. The empirical models and statistical methods appear sound and a sensitivity analysis was conducted to assess the impact of excluding controls with malformations.

Minor essential revisions

1. I wondered if there was a citation or other information indicating which co-occurring birth defects were considered major and warranted exclusion from the oral clefts cases, and what proportion of cases were excluded due to concurrent major defects.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.