Reviewer's report

Title: Place of death and health care utilization for people in the last 6 months of life in Switzerland: a retrospective analysis using administrative data

Version: 1 Date: 7 December 2012

Reviewer: Steffen T Simon

Reviewer's report:

Many thanks for the opportunity to review the manuscript "Place of death and health care utilization for people in the last 6 months of life in Switzerland: a retrospective analysis using administrative data" by Reich et al. It is a well written and with an interesting and important topic about place of death in Switzerland. The topic is relevant and appropriate for BMC Health Services Research.

The aim of the study is well defined. Most of data seems to be sound but the leading diagnosis is missing and PoD is based on insecure data (see Major Revision). The interpretation in the discussion section is well balanced and compared to other studies. It would be interesting to know more about Switzerland specific results in comparison to other countries.

Discretionary Revisions
- It would be helpful to know the functional status of the patients (e.g. KPS), if available.

Minor Essential Revisions
- Colours need to be explained in the Figure and it would be helpful to place each abbreviation of the region within the map.
- Results, population charac, 3rd line: number after dot is missing for "(median 83)"
- Tables: please provide the translation for the abbreviations within a footnote of the table, esp. for table 4

Major Compulsory Revisions
- Within "population characteristics", I miss the leading diagnosis of the patient - it could be the main reason for death. This must be available drawing data from a health care insurance. This is relevant regarding PoD.
- The last limitation is a major limitation and needs to be explained in detail within the method section. If I understand it correctly, the place of death was drawn indirectly by the origin of the last claim and there are no data how accurate they are. As PoD is the main topic, this needs more information and discussion of pros and cons (and risk of bias).
**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.