Author's response to reviews

Title: Effects of geodemographic profiles on healthcare service utilization: A case study on cardiac care

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Responses to Associate Editor’s Comments

Manuscript submitted to *BMC Health Services Research:*

Title: “Effects of Geodemographic Profiles on Healthcare Service Utilization: A Case Study on Cardiac Care”

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Dear Editor-in-Chief and Associate Editor,

We would like to thank the Associate Editor for her constructive comments and suggestions. We have taken great care to ensure that her concerns have been adequately addressed in this revision.

In what follows, we provide detailed responses to the Associate Editor’s comments and describe the related changes.

Sincerely,

Prof. Jiming Liu

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Associate Editor’s Comments

“...One large issue remains and the paper simply cannot be accepted until it is addressed: LHINs are not neighbourhoods. They are large administrative agglomerations. They encapsulate hundreds if not thousands of conventional neighbourhood units. It is simply not appropriate to characterize LHINs as neighbourhoods and the authors do not provide a convincing argument to the contrary despite this concern being raised by the reviewers. (1) First, the authors must provide a clearer definition as to what LHINs are and their size, scope, and scale. (2) Second, the authors need to remove references to LHINs as neighbourhoods and re-characterize them as something else, possibly 'sub-provincial regional administrative units' or something else along these lines. Or, they need to provide a definition of 'neighbourhood' that would enable a LHIN to be considered one and this definition would need to be appropriately referenced. The latter option, I suspect, will be impossible though given that LHINs are simply not neighbourhoods. Without these two changes being made it is simply not possible to accept this paper as it does not accurately characterize the geographic unit of analysis.”

[Our response]

Thank you for the helpful comments and suggestions. We appreciate the constructive comments and have revised our manuscript as follows:

(1) We have improved the definition of ‘LHINs’ and added a new table (i.e., Table 1 in this new version) to represent their differences in land areas, population densities, and administrative boundaries. Please refer to the second paragraph of the Background section on page 3 to find the revised definition for ‘LHINs’, and Table 1 to see the general information about each LHIN.

(2) We have removed references to LHINs as ‘neighborhoods’ throughout this version. In this revision, LHINs have been characterized as 'sub-provincial administrative units' as suggested by the Associated Editor, or ‘sub-regions of Ontario’. Please refer to the second paragraph of the Background section on page 3, and the first paragraph of the Discussion section on page 10, as examples to illustrate our revisions.

- End of responses -