Reviewer’s report

Title: Is the level of primary health care resourcing associated with diabetes-related ambulatory care sensitive hospitalisations? A review of the literature.

Version: 1 Date: 14 June 2013

Reviewer: Anne Nolan

Reviewer’s report:

The aim of this paper was to review studies which estimate the association between hospitalisation for type 2 diabetes-related ambulatory care sensitive conditions (ACSCs) and primary health care (PHC) resourcing.

The authors review 10 studies and find that seven of the 12 measures of the relationship between PHC resourcing and ACSC hospitalisations for type 2 diabetes had a significant negative relationship. However, three of the included studies did not adjust for health status. They conclude therefore that there is inconclusive evidence that more PHC resources are associated with reduced hospitalisations for type 2 diabetes-related ACSCs.

The paper is well-motivated and timely and it is clear that the authors have carried out a thorough and rigorous analysis of studies in this area.

I recommend publication subject to the following minor essential revisions:

1. The title of the paper suggests that the authors are reviewing studies that attempt to examine the link between PHC resources and hospitalisations for diabetes-related ACSCs. However, three studies analyse chronic ACSCs, i.e., not focussing exclusively on diabetes-related ACSCs.

2. While the authors note that in countries with subsidised or free access to PHC, ACSC hospitalisations have been used primarily as an indicator of PHC quality, there may be other barriers to accessing PHC other than the monetary cost of a PHC visit that are important in some of these settings (e.g., transport costs, costs of associated prescription medicines, etc.).

3. Apart from the requirement to be peer-reviewed and the inclusion of confounding variables, did the authors take into account the quality of the analysis in each of the included papers (e.g., appropriate methods, adequate sample size, etc.)?

4. The inclusion of studies that do not control for underlying health status is a concern; do the authors conclusions still hold when these studies are excluded?

5. Do the authors have any recommendations for the conduct of future studies on this issue?
**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