Reviewer's report

Title: Does the perception of fairness and standard of care in the health system depend on the field of study? - Results of an empirical analysis

Version: 3 Date: 7 February 2014

Reviewer: Samia Hurst

Reviewer's report:

The authors have done a satisfactory job of addressed the comments. However, several points remain.

• In my previous review, I asked why the chosen significance level was 10% as it seemed high. The authors’ answer is that this level is among those accepted in the econometric literature. I have to admit unfamiliarity with this literature. However, as a significance level of 10% means that there is a one in ten chance that the result is due to chance, the reported finding would be more convincing if it remained significant at a lower level. What findings remain significant at the 5% and 1% level?

• In my previous review, I asked the following: « How would the authors know whether it is greater or lesser knowledge of the health system, or different views on what fairness requires, that underpinned a difference in the perception of fairness? » The authors in the reply essentially answer that they cannot know this. Perhaps one way to begin to address this point, however, would be to see whether an evaluation of the standard of care as worse and of fairness as worse tended to covary. Perhaps a perception that patients sometimes do not get what they need might underpin both an unfavorable assessment of standard of care and of fairness. If they did not covary, then this interpretation is less likely. So: did they?

• A reference ought to be provided for the definitions of standard of care and of rationing. The Goold and Ubel definition of rationing has been influential.

• The response rate is now provided, but it is given as >90%: an exact number would be more appropriate

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.