Reviewer's report

Title: Implementation of Hospital Governing Boards: Views from the Field

Version: 2 Date: 12 November 2013

Reviewer: Margaret Elizabeth Kruk

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Review of “Implementation of Hospital Governing Boards: Views from the Field”

This is an innovative study assessing a promising approach to improving quality of care. It has several important strengths in particular the large sample of boards and use of multiple hospital and patient-level measures of quality. A few analytic issues are unclear, however.

Detailed comments and questions are below:

1. Page 4: Can you provide more detail on the structure and mission of the hospital boards? Who sits on these, how many members in general and what is their overall remit? This is relevant for external validity of these findings to other areas. Perhaps some of these details could also be added to Table 2 (could be “Structure and Activities of …”)

2. Page 5: The administration of the patient survey is unclear. Are these continuously used in hospitals for all discharges or were they administered for this study? Please provide more detail also on sample sizes and response rates per facility.

3. Page 6. How is the multivariable model constructed? What is the outcome: mean patient score (this would give an n=49) or are individual patient scores modeled with a fixed effect for hospital, which would give a larger n? Please provide the n in the results and the table.

4. Page 6: Further on the above point, assuming individual level outcomes, patient characteristics might be confounders in this relationship between board governance and patient satisfaction. Basic patient characteristics were available from the survey according to the paper by Webster et al. Also, were other variables available, such as the number of doctors/nurses, urban or rural setting?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no conflict of interest