Author's response to reviews

Title: Decomposition of the Drivers of the US Hospital Spending Growth, 2001-2009

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor,

I submit with enthusiasm on behalf of all the authors our manuscript entitled “Decomposition of the Drivers of the US Hospital Spending Growth, 2001-2009.” The study focused on an important topic that the US health care spending has resumed its high and rising growth rate in the 2000s, after a period of slow growth in the 1990s. While there are studies reporting the rising health care spending by year, over a short period, and/or in selected markets, there has been no research to more systematically examine the potential drivers over a longer period of time. Our study used a formal methodology – Oaxaca-Blinder decomposition – to investigate how well the historically important spending drivers explain the recent hospital spending trend in the 2000’s in the US.

We have important new findings. We found that much of the hospital spending growth is due to higher prices, not utilization. Furthermore, the well-known spending drivers do not seem to explain much of the price growth, although they account for a large portion of the utilization growth. Taken together, the results suggest that much of the rapidly rising hospital spending growth is driven by factors not commonly known or well measured, pointing to a critical area of research needed to investigate factors contributing to high provider prices.

The manuscript was submitted on Mar 22 but is now submitted again with additional information on contextual background and data sharing provided, per request of the editorial office. Please let me know if you have more questions that need to be addressed soon.

We look forward to hearing from your decision soon.

Sincerely,

Vivian Y. Wu, PhD, MS
Assistant Professor