Reviewer's report

Title: Measuring adverse events in Portuguese hospitals aiming to improve quality and patient safety

Version: 2 Date: 18 January 2014

Reviewer: Neree Claes

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This interesting study presents data of occurrence of AE’s in Portuguese hospitals: incidence, preventability, nature, impact and costs. The retrospective cohort study was carried out at three acute care hospitals in Lisbon. The identification of AE and their impact was done using a two-stage structured retrospective medical records review based on the use of 18 screening criteria. The incidence rate was 11.1% and 53.2% was preventable.

Abstract:
# The aims of this study differs in your abstracts versus your introduction. Please change.

Introduction:
# “In addition, it is also our aim to contribute to the development of innovative approaches to improve safety and healthcare quality in the hospital setting.” I can imagine that the latter is the aim of another trial/initiative that will be executed in the future. So, I would suggest to describe the statement in a broader context. Because at this moment the statement suggests that the latter is the aim of this study.

Methods:
# 3.5% files (1,669/47,783) during 1 year of the total hospital admissions out of 3 hospitals were randomly selected. Use percentage (namely 3.5%, it is more illustrative for the readers).
# two-stage structured retrospective medical records review was carried out based on the use of 18 screening criteria = perfect
# “…a wide experience in clinical audits”: specify
# Major remark: Physicians estimated the impact of AEs, either by the degree of physical impairment, or by disability at discharge (minimal, moderate or permanent impairment, and death). Is physical impairment estimated based on data in the medical file at the moment of discharge? If yes the is a discussable estimation. Criteria? Quality of medical files? Retrospective? Impairment 6 month after discharge?
# “… of each participate hospitals” >> “… participating hospital.”
# Direct costs: explain: type of costs: hospital, medication, …?
Results:
# No remarks
Discussion:
# “…austerity-reforms” Please explain
# “…HAI” Please explain

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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'