Reviewer’s report

Title: Measuring adverse events in Portuguese hospitals: a contribution to improving quality and patient safety

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Reviewer: Peter Davis

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1. I think the title of the paper would better if it read “Estimating the incidence of adverse events …”

2. There could be an improvement in the expression in the results section of the abstract. The second sentence should start “The majority of AEs were associated with…”. In the third sentence it should be “Most AEs” not “Most of AEs”, and should be “associated with death” not to. The average number of days is cited in the last sentence, and also elsewhere. Without knowing the “normal” average length of stay, it is hard to judge this quantity. In our study length of stay was about double for patients with AEs.

3. Results section. Last sentence of the first para should read “Most of the AEs (59.2%) occurred …” not occurs. Last sentence of the next para – unless you determined that AEs caused death (which usually requires quite careful analysis), you should use the phrase “associated with death” not “resulted in death”. Third para. What was the average length of stay? It is hard to judge your figure for AEs.

4. Discussion section. First sentence I suggest “We used retrospective medical record review following the HMPS methodology in order to assess …”. Second para fifth line “while using a clear criterion and standard …”

5. Authors’ contributions. First and second sentence “coordinate” should be “coordinated”.

6. Figure 1. “Percentage distribution …” not “Percentage of distribution …”.

7. Table 1. Should there be a total n and/or some explanation as to whether it was possible for a case to qualify under more than on criterion. And a total percentage?

8. I wonder whether it is worth mentioning the training of the team (say in the methods section)? Those kappa scores are good. I assume that these assessments were conducted “blind” (i.e. neither reviewer knowing the determination of the other) – in which case you should probably say so.