Reviewer's report

Title: Combinations of long-term care insurance services and associated factors in Japan: a classification tree model

Version: 1 Date: 5 January 2014

Reviewer: Ichiro Kai

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for giving me opportunity to review an interesting manuscript. Please consider some revisions.

Minor Essential Revisions

1 Background and Discussion are limited largely to Japanese situations. International readers might want to know more generalizable discussion and conclusions. For example, what the similarities and differences are between the present study and previous studies, what conclusions are drawn which can be generalized to another country or system? Please add literature review on long-term care service use in general. Also add the rationale for the selection of independent variables, based on the literature review.

2 The conclusion that the present data showed the lack of bias in service use is overemphasized in Abstract and Discussion. The lack of association in the present dataset does not necessarily prove the absence of the bias by CMs, agencies, or corporations.

3 Related to the above, why the authors did not use corporation (4 categories), agency (10 categories), or even CM (48 categories) itself as an independent variable? Instead, they chose to use the characteristics of CMs and agencies, which are less direct. State the reason. This could be a limitation of the present study.

4 What does “Needy” mean in Table 1 (at L3b, P29)?

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.