Reviewer’s report

Title: A descriptive retrospective study of time consumption in home care services: how do employees use their working time? Use of geographic information systems for spatial analysis of home care services in two northern Norwegian municipalities.

Version: 2 Date: 29 July 2014

Reviewer: Anne Martin-Matthews

Reviewer's report:

Overall, the manuscript is much improved by the responses to the previous reviews. The issues raised by both reviewers were generally well addressed, or it was explained why the nature of the data collection prevented consideration of a particular issue. The contributions of the manuscript, in advancing knowledge and understanding in this field, are now more apparent.

Minor Essential Revisions (I leave it to the editor to assure that these are addressed):

Tables 5 and 6 are important new additions to the ms. To be clear, however, the titles must quite explicitly indicate the differences: "allocation" seems to be the right language for table 5, but is this also correct for table 6? That was not evident to this reader. (This seems especially relevant, given that Table 6 includes time for documentation, a figure that was 'estimated' by the authors, and supported by the agencies but overall without an actual evidence-base.

7 could potentially be an important new addition. However, the formatting makes it quite unclear how to interpret the findings, especially in relation to the line of categories (serie 1) at the bottom. how does one interpret the percentages assigned to 'normal working hours' vs to 'overtime'? In order to interpret the significance of the percentages, one either needs to know the 'N', or the percentages across all categories should add to '100%'. As it stands, the Table is very difficult to interpret and should either be revised, or dropped. (Note also the varied, and incorrect, spelling of the word 'documentation'.

Discretionary Revisions

The manuscript states (lines 317 - 319) that "In this study, we wanted to show that managers need to take into account time spent on documentation. We estimated that this took 5 minutes per visit, on average, which was confirmed by the offices". The wording of this statement makes it sound as though the authors 'knew' the conclusion in advance, and sought to confirm it ("we wanted to show"). A more objective statement of purpose is to state that, "we examined whether managers need to ....".

The wording of lines 436-437 sounds quite tentative "our study shows that driving time and time required to write up statutory documentation seem to be
underestimated in planning weekly day schedules....” The statement seems hesitant and speculative, surprisingly so, given the weight of 'evidence' presented in the paper. Don't the data show that driving time and time required to write up statutory documentation were underestimated in planning weekly day schedules?

**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:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.