Author's response to reviews

Title: Impact of a fixed price system on the supply of institutional long-term care: a comparative study of Japanese and German metropolitan areas

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Chiatti,

Re: Manuscript reference No. 1212135865103361

Please find attached a secondly revised version of our manuscript “Impact of a fixed price system on the supply of institutional long-term care: a comparative study of Japanese and German metropolitan areas”, which we would like to resubmit for publication as a research article in BMC Health Services Research.

Since there are only a few revisions, we would like to comment herewith directly to your suggestions.

The paper has much improved, congratulations to the authors!

Thank you very much. We owe it to your positive suggestions and the insightful comments of the reviewers.

I would like to ask them to take into consideration the last suggestion from Herwig Ostermann, about deleting the last paragraph of the section "Political implications". "In the last paragraph of this section you refer to the initiative of the Japanese government to promote single-bed rooms and relate this initiative to your findings. However, your argument appears to be rather speculative and also the concluding sentence is too unspecific (“Well-balanced arrangements (...) are therefore needed”). Hence, I suggest deleting the last paragraph.

However, it would be valuable to focus on the issue of access to long-term care services in the last paragraph(s) as access represents a current political issue linked to both the amount of supply as well as the price regime, as the latter my
pose a substantial barrier to those lacking financial resources.”

We deleted the last paragraph and insert a new one reflecting the suggestions of Dr. Ostermann.

I additionally would like to ask you to insert a more detailed references list on the section "Explanatory variables" (including links to websites, reports, etc), in order to allow the readers to track back data sources. For instance, I miss the following references: 1) land price in the Japanese case study; 2) labour employment office data for NRW (average time taken to find a skilled elderly care nurse); 3) facility size in NRW, etc...

To (1):

Principally, all data except for data on facilities, wages and subsidies can be accessed through the web sites “[35] Statistics of Tokyo” or “[36] E-Stat” as mentioned in the section “data sources”. However, it is complicated to get data on land prices. We have now added the URL directly connected to the relevant data to the reference list [40]. In addition, we inserted the references for each variable ([35] or [36]).

To (2):

With “data was provided”, we indicated that the data was compiled from official data by the employment office, tailored to our needs upon request. As the employment office uses a specific name for the variable in their data set, we also added this name to the reference list [45] so that interested readers can ask the employment agency for the same data.

To (3):

Data on facilities including facility size in NRW also stemmed from official statistics. We inserted the reference number after each explanatory variable. I hope that it has become easier to retrace the data sources than before. Further, data on facilities in Tokyo originate from the data compiled (tailored to our requests) by the Welfare and Medical Service Agency as mentioned in the section “data sources”.

As to English quality pointed out by the BMC editorial office, the manuscript has been proof read by Edanz. If further improvement is necessary, please kindly let us know concretely in which aspect English should be improved.

We hope that the revisions in the manuscript and our accompanying responses will be
sufficient to make our manuscript suitable for publication in BMC Health Services Research.

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

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