Reviewer's report

Title: Local psychiatric beds appear to decrease the use of involuntary admission: A case-registry study

Version: 1 Date: 14 November 2013

Reviewer: andrew molodynski

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting and thoughtful article on a very important topic for mental health services. With some changes I hope that it will improve our understanding of the complex issues at play.

Major compulsory revisions

1. page 4 para 1. The final sentence regarding voluntary admission is something of an over simplification given the nature of the paper and the expertise of the authors. In my opinion some serious consideration needs to be given to the work of sjostrom for example regarding such things as 'coerced voluntaries' and uncoerced involuntaries and some acknowledgment of the growing literature around leverage.

2. page 7 para 2. I am concerned regarding the decision to look at 2 time points for compulsory treatment. In my mind it leads to confusion so i think the reasons for it need to be clearly explained. In my opinion form similar research studies it would have been better to have kept it simple and said compulsory or not compulsory only. I think this is potentially a significant issue and needs substantial clarification.

3. page 9 para 1. The difference in diagnosis needs to be explained as it suggests either differences in regions between actual levels of illness or differences in recording and practice. Both have potential impact upon the findings so explanation is needed.

4. page 13 para 2. The fact that DPC can only accept voluntary patients is clearly crucially important when considering the findings as it could explain the difference in its entirety. While not necessarily a problem (and very interesting indeed!) I believe it does require more robust and clear consideration earlier in the paper.

Minor essential

1. page 3 para 2. My understanding from the literature is that the proportion of detained patients has increased not the overall number. This requires more clarity.

2. page 6 last para. This paragraph seems a little confused. If the strength is lack of population movement and high rates of accuracy this could be stated more plainly.
3. page 12 para 3. I believe these points regarding continuity are crucial and deserve more consideration also. The work of Burns and colleagues in ECHO reached conclusions re continuity that might be of relevance.

4. page 14 para 1. I am not sure this conclusion is substantiated and it needs further clarity.

5. table 3 requires greater explanation of its cells for a general readership.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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