Reviewer's report

Title: Cost-effective ways to decrease inequality in health care

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Reviewer: Rob Carter

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written and coherent paper that offers some useful insights and recommendations to address the topic of 'cost-effective ways to decrease inequality in health care'. Importantly, the concept of equity is clearly defined (focus on access), and although rather narrow for some readers, is nonetheless of interest to many.

My key comments for the author's attention are:

i) For a paper that uses 'cost-effectiveness' in its title, there is poor coverage of the relevant health economics literature on the efficiency/equity trade-off; the current approaches; and methodological developments in this space (e.g. broadening concept of benefit to include equity; supply-side equity weights; ACE 2nd stage filter analysis; PBMA; options appraisal; multiple criteria analysis; etc.). It would have been helpful to position the contribution in the context of this literature if seeing this as a contribution to economic analysis. There is similarly a literature on priority setting in addition to appraisals of single interventions.

ii) The paper seems to take the referenced literature on trust to underpin some of the arguments, without any critical review of the methods adopted (e.g. how well was adherence/ deterioration of benefit modeled in the CBA’s referenced).

iii) While efficiency and equity are clearly very important policy objectives, there are also other important policy objectives that impinge on interventions for minority/disadvantaged groups - such as affordability; acceptability. The additional cost of tailor-made interventions for Indigenous Australians living in rural/remote locations is an obvious example.

In sum, to my mind a useful addition to the literature that would have been improved by locating itself more clearly within the health economics literature. Many economists will find this a useful but rather frustrating paper.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
No competing interests