Reviewer’s report

Title: Do medical outpatients want out of hours clinics?

Version: 2 Date: 8 April 2005

Reviewer: Katherine Virgo

Reviewer’s report:

General

The purpose of the research was to analyze patients’ preferences regarding scheduling of medical outpatient clinics at a single hospital facility in London. Unfortunately, the methods section is particularly weak and provides very little information regarding how the study was conducted.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. In the methods, there is no description of the statistical analysis methods used to analyze the data.

2. The most common reasons for not completing the survey are not described.

3. It is unclear whether study personnel were on hand in the clinic to answer questions and ensure that questionnaires were completed or whether patients were merely handed a questionnaire by the clinic clerk when they checked in.

4. How the sample size of 300 was selected is not described. No power analysis is presented.

5. There was no description of the methods used to ensure the patients did not complete multiple questionnaires during the time period of the study both within the same clinic and across clinics. Thus it is unclear whether the sample size consists of 300 unique patients or 300 questionnaires from some unknown number of patients.

6. Two previous studies had been conducted by other authors on the same topic as referenced in the discussion. The discussion of these studies should be moved to the background section.

7. For the first of the two previous studies, Anand et al., the sample size is not provided as a point of comparison to the current study. In addition, the authors state that Anand et al. "found that their patients were apparently happy with the times available to them." It is unclear what times were currently available to them.

8. For second of the two previous studies, the current author states “it may be affected by bias in that verbal responses alone were reported of a select group of patients i.e. only those already attending a Saturday morning clinic.” The authors should expand on this comment as it is unclear whether they have an issue with "verbal responses", the Saturday morning clinic sample, or both.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
None

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

None

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.