Reviewer's report

Title: Explicit criteria for prioritization of cataract surgery

Version: 1 Date: 15 July 2005

Reviewer: Joanne Tobacman

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors have presented several informative concepts very well. These include the variable social dependence, the usefulness of priority scores, and inclusion of an appropriateness rating as a variable in the priority score.

However, the current modeling is problematic due to its inclusion of variables that are not independent. For example, visual function is related to social dependence, ocular comorbidities are related to expected visual acuity, and appropriateness is related to visual acuity, visual function, expected visual acuity for some of the comorbidities, contralateral visual acuity, and ocular comorbidities. The appropriateness scores were determined by assessing the risk/benefit of performing cataract surgery, in relation to specific, hypothetical clinical situations described by the variables of interest.

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

I believe that RAND methodology has been used in some clinical settings to assess priority for surgery. (p.11, par 2) The development of appropriate and crucial indications was designed to facilitate prioritization.

Risk of blindness vs. benefit of surgery should be considered with the discussion of benefit (page 6, paragraph 2).

It is necessary to consider the lack of independent variables in the modeling for priority. Consideration of "the appropriateness variable" last (p.7, par 3) does not explain this, since determination of appropriateness is clearly dependent on the other variables cited. Also, social dependence is not independent of visual function with regard to ability to perform ADLs, and expected visual acuity is not independent of ocular comorbidities.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Some of the language needs to be modified, such as page 2, line 20 - "results" page 5, line 3 - "... the use of cataract surgery, which consists of..." page 7, line 2 - state the three main diagnostic groups. page 9, par 4, line 5 - which was forced to enter the last page 11, par 1 - e.g. Indications for cataract extraction have been evaluated by... page 14, par 2 - clarify "the continuous score provides an order for..." page 15, line 9 - clarify flow model
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**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:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.