Reviewer's report

Title: Seasonal variation in orthopedic health services utilization in Switzerland: The impact of winter sport tourism.

Version: 1 Date: 19 January 2006

Reviewer: stefano corra

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General
The great impact of winter sports injuries on the emergency systems of mountain areas is well known and represents a serious task for the people involved in the emergency care and hospital management of these areas. Few data are so far available to assist managers in planning hospital beds allocation according to seasonal admission variation related to winter sports. This study is original and although limited to orthopaedic admission it could represent the basis for further investigations (for example neurosurgical admission related to winter sports). Limitations of this study are honestly discussed by the authors (I perfectly agree that ski-lift facilities would have been a better indicator for the definition of winter sport area).

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

In “Background”: can you better explain how you divide Switzerland in 85 HSAo and why the variability of the hospital numbers (from 1 to 27) is so wide?
In “Methods”: in the inclusion criteria, primary diagnosis, you include a set of diagnosis that are not always related to trauma (chronic degenerative diagnosis) what is the rationale?

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

You do not take into account in this study the national tourism (an increase in the local resident admission rate in WSA can be partially due to internal tourism). This is probably not so relevant for a small country like Switzerland but I would mention it.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests