Reviewer’s report

Title: Evaluation of the utilization of the preanaesthetic clinics in a University Teaching Hospital

Version: 2 Date: 31 March 2006

Reviewer: Jaideep Pandit

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General
This is a much-improved manuscript. There are still some presentational issues which will need to come out in sub-editing.

1. it is unfortunate that the authors did not use the same numbering to address my points – this would have helped correlate their responses.

2. use % rather than per cent in text

3. give p-value for comparison in abstract

4. add “scheduled for surgery” after the word “children” in abstract

5. throughout text, the authors have a tendency to omit ‘the’ and ‘a’ before many nouns.

6. page 3 bottom: “…test the hypothesis that…”

7. page 4, 2nd para – remove ‘since’

8. later in same para: “initially to fill…”

9. in results, avoid spurious accuracy – round up% to next whole, ie, not 50.2% but just 50%.

10. page 7, 2nd para: remove ‘denomination of the’ (and also page 8); change ‘majority’ to ‘group’

11. throughout text, use small letters for urology, orthopaedics etc

12. Discussion. I suggest re-word.

a. At end of 1st sentence add ‘associated with a very high rate of cancellation of 30%’.

b. Then move the 3rd sentence to after 2nd sentence of 2nd para of the Discussion.

   c. Start 2nd para with ‘There are many possible reasons for the high cancellation rate.’

   d. Put ‘miscellaneous’ in inverted commas; and also ‘third world’

   e. Re-word last sentence on page 9

   f. Page 9, top, delete entire sentence starting ‘It is noteworthy that although…’
g. Replace ‘impacted upon’ by ‘influenced’ – and also later replace ‘impacts in many spheres’ with ‘effects’
h. Later – ‘clinics play a part in evaluating surgical.’
i. Page 12 – delete first para and delete sub-heading

13. delete refs 8 and 9 – obscure

14. table 1: the words right at the bottom should surely follow the table title. No ‘n%’ needed below ‘Reasons’. Rationalise decimal points as advised above.

15. table 2, the words right at the bottom should surely follow the table title, and change words to ‘percentage refers to proportion…’

16. figure 2 – same comment as 15. I have an important problem with this table. It is misleading since it suggests that, for example, gen surg are the worst ‘offenders’ – this is not really the case since table 1 also shows that gen surg are the best referrers. As it stands, table 2 only reflects the overall workload by specialty. A better and more relevant measure is really the % of patients cancelled as a proportion of the number referred by that specialty. So, if 100 gen surg patients are referred (a high number), and 20 patients cancelled, this yields a 20% cancellation rate. If on the other hand, urology only refers 20 patients (a low number) but 18 are cancelled, this should be represented as 90% - a very high rate for urology. Of course I do not know the true figures, but this revised table would better reflect the success of preassessment.

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

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests