Author's response to reviews

Title: Cross sectional study of Performance Indicators for English PCTs: Testing Construct Validity and Identifying Explanatory Variables

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Norton

We are pleased to submit our paper “Cross sectional study of Performance Indicators for English PCTs: Testing Construct Validity and Identifying Explanatory Variables” for consideration for publication in BMC Medicine. This paper provides an analysis of six performance indicators available in the public domain for the 303 English PCTs, including the new Quality and Outcomes Framework. We find that there is little evidence of construct validity as determined by correlations between different indicators, with the exception of different measures of access to services. We also report that region appears to have an effect on performance. For example, patients in London receive the lowest scores for equity of admissions and report the lowest satisfaction with their care, although have a relatively high proportion of 3 Star PCTs.

The results question whether performance indicators at PCT level should be based on aspects of care that are not within the direct control of the PCT. Given the current emphasis on ensuring patients have sufficient information on the quality of different health care providers, and within the context of the new Annual Health Check, we consider that this paper is extremely timely and should be of interest to those involved in quality assessment.

Thank you in advance for considering our paper for BMC Medicine and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

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