Reviewer's report

Title: Day care cataract surgery in Central and Southern Italy: a multicentric survey

Version: 3 Date: 12 December 2006

Reviewer: Daniel J McCarty

Reviewer's report:

General

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

Please put the survey response rate in the abstract. The first sentence of the methods section in the abstract could be rewritten as “a questionnaire was sent to 25 cataract surgery centers in nine health districts of central and southern Italy.” The first sentence of the results section of the abstract should note that 10 surveys were received (40%).

The background should be shortened considerably. All of this could be communicated in 1 or 2 paragraphs, including a mention of the estimated cost of day vs. overnight cataract surgery in Italy.

I don’t understand the second to last paragraph of the background section: “surgery of the lens” has an admissibility threshold value for inpatient cataract surgery of 46%??? - It begs a lot of questions: Who sets this threshold? and why? None of the surveys returned seemed to breach this threshold. Perhaps it could be briefly mentioned in the discussion section that the government set the threshold and the results of this study suggest hospitals are under this threshold.

In the Results section, the first sentence does not appear to present data from this survey. Instead it appears to present national trend data. These tend data are important but should be moved to the discussion section.

The number of surveys returned needs to be mentioned in the results section.

The columns “Neuroleptanesthesia / proidone iodine disinfection” and “follow-up at 24 hours” all have the same responses, so these columns can be deleted from the table. Perhaps these results can be mentioned in the text of the results section.

The discussion is too long and unfocused. You should present the national trends here with your data suggesting that day cataract surgery rates are increasing but that there is still substantial variations in rates between the health regions. Then list the study limitations, etc.

In the second paragraph of the discussion section, last sentence, the author state that “these differences are related to socio-economics and administrative approaches in Southern Italy”. However, The authors can not prove this with their study data - they can only speculate. This should be clarified.

The 3rd paragraph of the discussion section is very confusing. For example “we are not able to study within country variations” - isn’t this the purpose of this study? I would suggest deleting this paragraph.

Can the authors calculate how much funding could be saved if Italy adopted more day cataract surgery? Including this estimate could help raise the importance of adopting day surgery.

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

SPSS is “Statistical Program for the Social Sciences”. It is misspelled in the methods section.
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 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.