Reviewer's report

Title: Diffusion of good practices of care and decline of the association with case volume: the example of breast conserving surgery

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Reviewer: Anees B Chagpar

Reviewer's report:

General
This is an interesting manuscript from Italy, which seeks to determine the adoption of breast conserving surgery from 2000-2004 in various hospitals categorized by volume. The authors find that higher breast conservation rates are associated with higher volume centers. While these results are intriguing and certainly also found in other parts of the world, one wonders whether in fact, this is because large centers act as "early adopters" of new techniques. Could it be that the larger centers offered adjuvant radiation therapy or were close to centers that did, whereas the smaller centers which were perhaps more rural did not? Could this have influenced patients' decision-making regarding breast surgical options? What about the use of immediate reconstruction? Presumably, this would have been greater in the larger centers than the smaller ones, but nonetheless, this information would be useful in putting the rates of breast conserving surgery into perspective. As well, were these hospitals teaching hospitals? Perhaps there is a difference based on this element as well. What about the surgeons in these hospitals -- were they different in terms of specialization or fellowship training?

This is an interesting paper which brings to light the association between hospital volume and breast conserving surgery rates. I congratulate the authors on their fine paper.

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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)
The authors may wish to consider providing more information regarding the hospital characteristics, and perhaps that of the surgeons working in them.
What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests