Reviewer's report

Title: The perception of healthcare quality of the elderly in the city of Bari, South Italy.

Version: 1 Date: 16 May 2007

Reviewer: Marten Lagergren

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper concerns an area of vital importance and conveys essential and interesting information conc. the usage of health care among the elderly and how they perceive the provided services.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
The presentation of results should be improved and clarified by more use of tables.

The conclusion do not follow readily from the results and are not self-evident. The links of argument should be explained more clearly and maybe alternative solutions discussed.

It should also be explained more clearly the role of the GP in the study. Did the GP have access to patient interviews? Did they patients’ know about this before and maybe shape their answers accordingly? How can the GP know if the patient is satisfied or not?

The list of references contains very little literature on the subject from outside Italy

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. In footnote 1 is stated that for GP:s with less than 1 500 patients a sample of 2.5% was studied. Should it not be 1000 patients?
2. Ref [14] is lacking
3. Results re. limitations in ADL is unclear. In "State of health" it is mentioned that 43.8% have ADL-limiations due to a health problem. In "Disablities" it is said - among others - that 18.7% need help to take a bath and that 1.5% is unable to carry out at least one ADL-activity. This does not go together!
4. References to table 1 is lacking in section "Laboratory tests...". Headlines in the table are misplaced. It should be explained why the totals (never shown) differ between the different parts of the table.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
"Integrated home assistance" (page 2) could be explained.

The reasons why GP and patient opinions differ could be discussed

Mean age 73.6 years is not very high in this context. (In the Swedish district where I work with the SNAC-study the mean age of the care recipients is 86 years!)

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 importance in its field

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

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 in relation to this paper.