Reviewer's report

Title: Where Should Momma Go? Evaluating Current Nursing Home Performance Measurement Strategies and Offering a More Conservative Alternative

Version: 1 Date: 23 February 2007
Reviewer: John F Schnelle

Reviewer's report:

General
This article provides an interesting discussion of the issues relevant to giving consumers information relevant to choosing a nursing home. However, no real evaluation of current systems or of the now proposed system is provided, and it is unclear to me if the conservative approach suggested by the authors does anything differently from the current systems. According to the discussion, provided in this paper, all of the systems are probably based on data whose relationship to the actual care residents receive is suspect and a conservative approach would be to not use any of the data to choose a home. Alternatives not described in this paper would be to visit homes and observe and ask questions for the purpose of getting first hand information. There have been several reports about how to do this including one in consumer reports. Despite my concerns, I do think their discussion of the issues and the logic that guided their efforts would be of interest to the journal audience. Improvements to this discussion would be an elaboration of the validity studies and particularly those studies that directly measured if care that residents receive was different between facilities with different QI scores and staffing levels. The only discussion point was that these studies were done with no indication of what they found. A review of these studies by the National Quality Forum indicated there were no differences in observed care between facilities with different QI scores but that there were differences in observed care between facilities with different staffing. Since the entire point of the consumer reporting system is to say something about the care that residents receive, it seems that these conclusions should be discussed.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
none

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
none

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
none

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.