Author's response to reviews

Title: Linkage of health and aged care service events: comparing linkage and event selection methods

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Author's response to reviews:

Dear Dr da-Silva

Thank you for the further comments on our article. We have considered the reviewers comments carefully, and have revised the manuscript accordingly. Please find our response to the particular comments below. As only one of the reviewers (CQ) requested further changes, the labelling of the matters discussed below refers to her report.

Major point 1: Quality of N linkage

The text under the sub-heading “Quality of the N linked dataset” representing new results has been moved with the heading to the beginning of the Results section. The text remaining under the heading “Selection from person (N) linkage” has been slightly rearranged to allow for this change.

Major point 2:

(a) Name of the strategy: Because of the use of a several demographic variables when undertaking E linkage, CQ suggested changing the name of the E method (from event-based matching). While the method does use some demographic data, in event-based matching identifying links between datasets is only possible because of the availability of event information and would not be possible using only the demographic data. In addition, the authors have used the name in other publications and so do not want to change the name. Therefore, some text has been inserted in the description directly under the heading “Event-based (E) linkage” to emphasise the centrality of the event data in event-based linkage. In addition, there has been some minor re-wording in the “Conclusion” section of the Abstract.

(b) Length of section “Constrained strategy”: CQ said that this section was too long and suggested moving much of this section to an Appendix. Rather than moving the material to an Appendix, we have moved the bulk of this material into a table (new Table 1) and used a Question and Answer approach. There has been some rewording to fit this new format and to clarify a number of points.

Major point 3: reference to WebSphere software

A reference and brief explanation of the software have been added.
Major point 4: Table 3
CQ suggested that this table needed further clarification. To make the table more readily understood, hospital and RAC events have been specifically labelled in the left hand column and the legend has been adjusted to reflect this. In addition, more detailed explanations of the various link concordances have been included in the right hand column of the table.

Major point 5:
(a) Table 6 (new Table 7): Table has been reduced as suggested, with the relevant text adjusted.
(b) Table 7 (old number): Table has been deleted as suggested, with the relevant text adjusted.

Minor point a: text has been reworded to make the sentence clearer.
Minor point b: a reference to Table 5 (new Table 6) has been included in the first paragraph under the heading “Accuracy of E linkage” (in the Results section).

We look forward to hearing your response to our amended paper.

Yours sincerely
Rosemary Karmel