Reviewer’s report

Title: Estimated time spent on preventive services by primary care physicians

Version: 1 Date: 20 July 2008

Reviewer: Reuben McDaniel

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. The authors have considerable demographic data but do not use this data to uncover possible explanatory relationships. For example, race or payment method may well be related to dependent variables of interest in this study. The authors should at least explain why these variables were not used in the analysis and the reasons should be both analytical and theoretical.

2. The authors suggest reasons for deficiencies in preventive care, for example, “Physicians may not have enough guidance about which services they need to address” p. 3, they but they do not (and probably cannot) shed any light on these reasons. This makes the manuscript misleading. One thinks one is going to be informed about the “reasons” that are noted in the introduction but the manuscript does not address these reasons for physician behavior so it is hard to understand why the reason was given in the first place. Additionally, if the authors believe that they are providing a comprehensive list of possible explanations for the physicians behavior, then there are significant omissions (patient preferences for example) that cast doubt on the author’s understanding of the phenomenon they are studying. The authors would be well served by focusing their preliminary discussion on issues that they plan to address in the research. Then the authors should be very clear about how their research informs these specific issues. As it now stands the manuscript lacks clear focus and the contribution is unclear.

3. The conclusions should show what new insights this study provides. As it now stands, the conclusions suggest that this study confirms what was not in doubt before the study was done. So it is unclear why we should add this study to the literature.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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