Reviewer's report

Title: Targeted individual exercise programmes for older medical patients are feasible, and changes hospital and patient outcomes: a service improvement project

Version: 4 Date: 7 October 2008

Reviewer: Nicholas F Taylor

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General comments
The authors have done a good job of addressing the reviewer comments. The manuscript is improved and has greater clarity in emphasising that it is a quality improvement project focusing on feasibility.

Minor essential changes
1. Title: The title could be qualified/amended to ‘and may change hospital and patient outcomes."
2. Abstract (page 3, last sentence before conclusion): Suggest change to “Trends of an average 15.6% LOS ...”. It appears contradictory to state that there was a 15.6% LOS reduction that was not statistically significant.
3. Method: Functional Maintenance Exercise Programme (pages 8/9): This section has been improved with the extra information but would still be difficult for another therapist to replicate. The choice of exercises (n=118) was vast and include generic skill training activities such as walking (ex 104) and stairs (ex 118) as well specific exercises addressing impairments that could affect mobility (e.g. ankle pump ex. 15). Also, clarify that the programme was administered once daily. What were the typical number of exercises?
4. I still think the available baseline and discharge measures of age, gender, PCCL, and EMS should be reported for the two groups in a separate Table. This would give the secondary analysis of effect some context and allow the reader to evaluate if any differences between the groups, apart from the intervention, could have contributed to the results.

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'