Reviewer's report

Title: A cost minimisation analysis of a telepaediatric otolaryngology service

Version: 1 Date: 30 July 2007

Reviewer: Kenneth M McConnachie

Reviewer's report:

General
Interesting and useful analysis.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. I believe that the underlying assumption of cost-minimization studies – that alternatives evaluated are equal in effectiveness – should be acknowledged in the Background section. In addition, it seems appropriate to provide some assessment of the validity of this assumption (e.g., from prior studies) in the Discussion section. This latter discussion provided, but its relevance to the underlying assumption of cost-minimization studies should be mentioned.

2. Table 1 indicates that a much lower proportion of children were admitted from Tele-ENT visits than from OPD-ENT visits. Does this mean that the “case mix” between these comparison groups was not comparable? How do such clinical differences affect the cost-minimization analysis?

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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. The abbreviation RCH appears in the Results section of the Abstract, but it is never defined in the Abstract.

2. Please clarify: p3, para2, last sentence. Were those 1,980 ENT admissions to hospital inpatient units?

3. Table 3. ISDN line charges is mistakenly listed as “ISND” charges.

4. Page 9, 1st sentence in section on Sensitivity analysis. Second line of this sentence should read, “…of the instrument was greater than the effect of changes in the initial…”

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. I am not sure there is a need for Figures 1 and 2.

2. Might consider adding an overall worst-case analysis (comparison based on highest cost estimate of Tele-ENT) and an overall best-case analysis
(comparison based on lowest cost estimate of Tele-ENT).

**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:** 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.