Reviewer's report

Title: An Intervention Program to Reduce the Number of Hospitalizations of Elderly Patients in a Primary Care Clinic

Version: 2 Date: 16 September 2007

Reviewer: Steve Iliffe

Reviewer's report:

General
Thank you for asking me to review this interesting and well-written paper on a topic of importance in all industrialised countries with health services that cover whole populations.

The paper is a case study of a single primary care centre serving a deprived population. The centre had higher than average admission rates and costs before the intervention to change clinical practice, but the intervention appears successful on a number of parameters.

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

1. Case studies teach a lot about processes but their outcomes may not be readily generalisable, and this needs to be acknowledged in a discussion of the methodological limits of this study.

2. The processes need some further description to make them easier for an international audience to understand. A more detailed is needed account of how the clinic staff came to the conclusions they did about what needed to change. Given Israel's pre-eminence in use of community oriented primary care approaches, it would be useful to relate this case study to that body of theory.

3. Similarly, it would be helpful to know how they devised their very complex intervention, and why they chose the components that they did in re-engineering services. There is a large body of knowledge on organisational change that could be used to explain their actions.

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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)

The choice of outcome measures would be part of that discussion, and would allow the authors to emphasise the clinical outcomes in their methods section, rather than introduce them later in the paper.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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