Reviewer's report

Title: Disparities in the Use of Ambulatory Surgical Centers: A Cross Sectional Study

Version: 1 Date: 20 April 2009

Reviewer: Laxmaiah Manchikanti

Reviewer's report:

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS:

The idea of the manuscript is excellent; however, the authors make numerous statements throughout the abstract and text which are not based on the evidence. The number of statements made and the references quoted with regards to ASCs being more efficient and less expensive etc., are not proven by evidence or the statements in those documents. There is no question that an increasing number of surgeries are being performed on an outpatient basis. However, the present impressions are that the location of the surgical procedure being performed is based on the surgeon’s preference, sometimes the surgeon’s ownership interest in a surgery center, ownership in a specialty hospitals, and finally, convenience.

While copay was a major issue in the past, the new regulations are equalizing these differences. For private insurances, copay is similar whether it is performed in an outpatient surgery in a hospital or in ASCs. In the majority of the cases, private insurers are more biased towards the hospital setting with their contracts with copay rather than outpatient setting.

There is also substantial difference between certificate of need states and those without certificate of need.

Consequently, many of the propositions made and the conclusions reached do not correlate with the evidence presented.

The authors need to extensively revise the manuscript, matching with their assumptions.

The type of cases reviewed are also of concern. For example, interventional pain management is one of the major areas of utilization of ASC services, specifically in Florida, probably more common than urology and this was not included.

The statement with regards to expansion of multiple services in surgery centers basically does not increase access to patient care, it only lets physicians perform the procedures which are being performed in the offices.

All in all, this is a very good idea if appropriate methodology is utilized and statements, results, and conclusions are based on the available evidence.
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.