Reviewer’s report

Title: Patterns of HIV Portuguese hospitalizations: a hierarchical survival model

Version: 2 Date: 3 June 2009

Reviewer: Kamil Barbour

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have done a very good job of addressing my comments. The paper is much improved. There are just a few more revisions that need to be made.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The first paragraph of the discussion needs to do a better job of summarizing the findings. What is the main point and significance that the authors need to take out of this paper? I don’t seem to get a sense of that when I read it.

Example: To our knowledge, this is the first paper that takes uses hierarchical modeling to account for hospital and individual characteristics among HIV/AIDS discharges in Portugal. Risk factors for mortality in the frailty model included male gender, older age, a higher number of diagnoses, urgent admission, pneumonia, and admission to a non-central hospital.

That summarizes the significance and primary findings for the readers.

Remove the sentence discussing the main objectives that is already in the introduction.

2. Please add references for type of DRG, central hospital and catchment area (and an explanation). You have provided references and interpretations only for gender and hospital size. It is important to improve your discussion.

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.