Reviewer's report

Title: Does the company's economic performance affect access to occupational health services?

Version: 1 Date: 11 June 2009

Reviewer: H.Nico Nico Plomp

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It is surely an interesting study because of the subject and the large number of cases, but the data and conclusions are very restricted and specific to the Finnish situation. Only the reimbursement system itself, a typical Finnish achievement, might explain that economic performance do not affect health cost expenditures.

An all embracing statistical technique has been applied that gives a general conclusion but no insight in the ‘process or mechanism’ that fuels the interaction between economic performance and health cost expenditures.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. In order to generalize the conclusion beyond the Finnish situation more specific information on the character of the obliged OHS –products (when can one speak about fringe benefit?) and the reimbursement system (are all deliveries compensated?)

2. Although the assumption that was made (economic performance affects health cost expenditures) was not confirmed, hardly any theoretical reflection is made on the ‘process or mechanism’ between economic performance and health cost expenditures. There is a lot of literature on cost-benefit of OHS-services. The relationship between economic performance and health service expenditures is probably not linear; in an economically very bad (favourable?) situation an effect might occur. There might be confounding variables such as quality of HRM department, size of the company etc. Eventually opinions of employers or trade unions can be quoted in order to produce hypothetical explanations. These assumption made on variables in the model (% blue collar workers for instance) are not underpinned due to lack of reflection on the mechanism. Reflections, hypothetical explanations should be presented in the introduction as well in the discussion section.

3. Assumptions on level of expenditures and success of services (as mentioned in Conclusion paragraph) are not founded in the data and should be left out. Please be focused on the objective

Discretionary Revisions

4. Interpretation of table 5 and 6 becomes easier when odds-ratio’s are
presented.

**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:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'