**Reviewer's report**

**Title:** Dutch healthcare reform: did it result in performance improvement of health plans? A comparison of consumer experiences over time

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 6 April 2009

**Reviewer:** Alain C Enthoven

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First, overall, I find it to be a fairly solid, competent paper. My main issue is that the time period is too short. As the authors recognize, it takes time to identify deficiencies and create quality improvement programs. The article would be much more interesting and persuasive if it included 2008 data. You might want to ask the authors when they could obtain 2008 data and update the article. As the authors observe, the transition year always causes a great deal of confusion, overload of call centers, frustration, etc. There are really two years here, 2005 being merely the baseline. So it is 05 to 06 and 06 to 07. I think that is too little data to learn much from the study. Now to your questions:

1. Question is well defined.
2. Methods appear appropriate and well described (though I am not au courant on these research methods.
3. As far as I can tell, the data appear sound and relevant to the question.
4. I think it adheres to relevant standards for reporting.
5. The discussion and conclusions are well balanced and adequately supported, except for the deficiency that two years is really too soon to tell, considering the effects of the introduction of change.
6. Limitations are clearly stated.
7. It appears to me that they acknowledge work upon which they are building 8. Accurately convey what has been found? Better to say "comparison of consumer experiences over a SHORT time." 9. The writing is acceptable. In Box 1, they use the word "restitution" when they should use "reimbursement."

In sum, I think it would be much more interesting with 2008 data. By then, all participants will have had more time to adjust to the new environment. I do think that an ongoing examination of whether and how well is managed competition working is an important activity.