Reviewer’s report

Title: Appropriateness of acute admission and in-patient stay for patients with long term neurological conditions

Version: 1 Date: 28 July 2008

Reviewer: Jee-In I Hwang

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions
  1. It is not clear how inappropriate length of stay was measured in the study. This study did not review entire hospitalisation days per patient. The previous studies reported that the prevalence of inappropriate in-patient days was higher in the latter part of entire hospitalisation days.
  - This study was conducted using prospective review of medical records. Did the authors judge the length of stay as inappropriate when an in-patient day of whole in-patient days was inappropriate? And was the in-patient day randomly sampled from entire hospitalization days?
  - How many in-patient days were reviewed per patient?
  The definition of inappropriate length of stay should be clarified.

2. The operational definition of "long term neurological conditions (LTNCs)" needs to be specified for clarity as inclusion criteria in selecting participants.

3. In the Study aims, the last one needs to be changed into "....predictive of inappropriateness".

4. In the Procedure, it is not clear what the authors collected using structured interview. Data collected can be separated and described by method. Or the authors may use interview as a complementary method besides medical record review.

5. In the Analysis, the fourth sentence needs to be rewritten.

6. The number of tables can be reduced. For example, table 1 and 2 may be represented only in the text. And table 4, 5, 6 can be represented as ranges in the text in Method section.

- Minor Essential Revisions
  1. In Table 8, please check the value of IQR of "length of stay" in the column of "length of stay appropriateness (=No)".

- Discretionary Revisions
  1. Title: You can specify the level of care reviewed in the title. For example, "... in acute hospitals".
Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.