Reviewer’s report

Title: Impact of Hospital Mergers on Staff Job Satisfaction: A Quantitative Study

Version: 4
Date: 17 August 2014

Reviewer: Tor Ingebrigtsen

Reviewer’s report:

The author has conducted a longitudinal controlled and quantitative study of staff job satisfaction in a total of nine hospital trust mergers in the NHS during a six year period. This is of great interest since previous studies usually have been qualitative case studies, and since the result contradict most previous studies. Accordingly, the research questions is interesting, and it is well defined.

The methods are appropriate and well defined, allowing for replication of the study. The data are sound and well controlled, and the manuscript adheres to relevant standards. The discussion and conclusions are balanced and well supported by the data, the title and abstract accurately convey the findings, and the writing is acceptable.

I recommend publication after minor essential revisions:

Results, page 13/35, line 20 onwards:

The author reports that the number of staff responses was dramatically reduced after study year 1 as a consequence of the mergers. I do not understand this - was it because of the sampling method used, or because the number of staff was significantly reduced as a consequence of the mergers? Please clarify and consider whether this is a methodological weakness that requires consideration in the Discussion.

Tables:
Please explain all abbreviations in the tables in footnotes.

Figures:
The footnote accompanying Figure 2 appears incomplete.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I have been the leader (CEO) of a Norwegian hospital merger and may so be considered to favor good outcomes from such processes. Except form this, I declare that I have no competing interests.