Reviewer's report

**Title:** Does type of hospital ownership influence physicians' daily work schedules? An observational real-time study in German hospital departments

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 25 March 2009

**Reviewer:** Christian Schmidt

**Reviewer's report:**

The authors are dealing with an interesting topic that is of growing interest in the German hospital market. The question posed is well defined.

1. Concerning the methodology it would be helpful to know, where the hospitals were located, I guess it was Berlin. However, the authors should give information about the sample size (Why these 12 hospitals), their comparability to the average hospital in Germany and potential predominance of for-profit or hospitals run by charity organizations. This would help to generalize the findings.

Table 1 is somewhat difficult to understand. What do the mean values represent? Hospital beds in total or is there an index? Please specify for the reader. Table 2 is not mentioned in the text (On page 7 table 3 is mentioned after table 1). In addition, it would help to explain this table. Frequency and percentage alone do not help the reader to understand the message the authors would like to give. Discussion should include data from former studies conducted by the "Statistisches Bundesamt (Fachserie 12/Reihe 6.1 und 6.1.1, 2006)”, where workload between different ownerships was analyzed.

2. Quality aspects are discussed workload and communication which has been proven as one main key to patient satisfaction and patient safety. This should be mentioned.

**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' below