Reviewer's report

Title: An outpatient antibiotic stewardship intervention during the journey to JCI accreditation

Version: 2
Date: 5 November 2013

Reviewer: Nithima Sumpradit

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Background

• There is a discrepancy between the objective of the paper “summarizing the relevant experiences in intervention programs…” and the writing structure of the paper that is more like a research article (methods, results & discussion). If it is not a research article, the paper structure should be reorganized. Or, if this is a research article, the paper should clearly define the objective.

• There is insufficient information to demonstrate or convince the audience about the importance or rationale of this study. This background section is overcrowded with ideas but did not clearly frame the study question. The problem statement is also unclear. Need literature review to support arguments as well.

Methods

• Details in the method session are insufficient to repeat the results. For example, in the result session (Paragraph 1, line 11-12) mentioned about “…moxifloxacin, levofloxacin, … and clarithromycin” – this is the first time the reader learn about the list of observed antibiotics and may have questions about what kinds of antibiotics are observed in this study, what kinds of antibiotics are classified as “first line” “second line” and “third line.” There are others (e.g., types of departments included in this study – internal medicine, surgical and what else) to be identified and revised.

• Are there any inclusion and exclusion criteria for this study? How many prescriptions are included? How were the rates of DRPs identified? Information about methodological justification should be described.

• In the ‘process of intervention’ session, it lacks of focus as the interventions were presented as a checklist. What are the key interventions in this study? The interventions should be grouped by their functions (e.g., educational, motivational etc) or else defined by researchers.

• Among all interventions, perhaps the most interesting intervention is “(7) Retrospective appropriateness evaluation of antibacterial-containing prescriptions were performed monthly by clinical pharmacists and the results were discussed in the meeting of Drug & Therapy Committee (DTC) and published on the hospital local area network. “Dear doctor” letters were sent from DTC to physicians. Fines would be imposed on physicians who wrote seriously
inappropriate prescriptions. If there is an error for the second time for the same physician, the prescribing privilege will be deprived.” It is the audit-feedback measure and with a penalty for doctors. Please explain more on how this works, how much for the fines, how doctors respond to this measure and how many doctors are subjected to this penalty?

• Please clearly state a list of outcome measures for this study. Outcome measures stated in the method session should be corresponding to the result session.

Results
• Details about the results are not sufficient. Tables or Graphs should be used as appropriate.

Discussion
• Study results should not be presented for their first time in this discussion session. For example, Paragraph 3 – “Our study presented 0.4% of antibiotic prescriptions were off-label.” The discussion session should refer to information in result session.

• Should include the limitations of this study

Conclusion
• Inconsistency between the conclusion (i.e., we examined the impact of intervention program …) and the objective of the study. Additionally, a term ‘impact’ is not an appropriate term for this study.

• The conclusion is not complete. The session should include important findings.

Abstract
• Need to revise to match with the paper contents.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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.