Reviewer’s report

Title: Telephone counselling by nurses in Norwegian primary care out-of-hours services: A cross-sectional study

Version: 0 Date: 25 Nov 2016

Reviewer: Shlomo Vinker

Reviewer's report:

To the Editor

BMC Family Practice

Re: Manuscript Number: FAMP-D-16-00371. Telephone counseling by nurses in Norwegian primary care out-of-hours services: A cross sectional study.

General

The out of hours services in recent years are under a change, less family physicians are willing to take responsibility of their patients 24/7 and more technological solutions are available. So such an evaluation is important.

Abstract

Methods

It is needed to know the whole range of telephone contact results and not only these ended by the nurse.

Background

Well written

Methods

"Time of day" - I think you should analyze separately the week days and the weekend days when there is no other medical service.
"As many of the ICPC-2 codes involves similar symptoms, we grouped some related ICPC-2 codes (details not shown)." - Please add as an appendix.

Statistical analysis should be intensified beyond simple descriptive statistics - for example, please make comparisons between day and night, week days vs. weekends, look for differences between the centers etc. And add significance levels.

Results

There was a large difference in rates of telephone calls per inhabitant and a large range of triage rates between centers. This must be presented, analyzed and discussed.

It is important to describe age range, age adjusted rates of triage etc.

If you feel that there will be data overload you can skip the gender differences that had a smaller variation.

Discussion

"Fever, abdominal pain, cough, ear pain and general symptoms were the RFEs most frequently handled by nurse telephone advice." - In order to get to this conclusion we must know the general frequency of symptoms before the triage.

"Differences between the LEMCs regarding…" - This section is too general and adds nothing to the understanding of the results.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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