Reviewer’s report

Title: Post-Acute Care Referral in United States of America: A Multiregional Study of Factors Associated with Referral Destination in a Cohort of Patients with Coronary Artery Bypass Graft or Valve Replacement

Version: 0 Date: 19 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?

Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

No - there are minor issues

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

Yes - experiments and analyses were performed appropriately

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

No - there are minor issues

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Could an appropriately REVISED version of this work represent a technically sound contribution?

Probably - with minor revisions
PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: The paper is well-written with clear study objectives and conclusion.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

I have only minor comments for the authors to consider.

1. Abstract: You may spell out USA when first appears in the article. Add full stop after Charlson comorbidity index (page 1, line 33).

2. Background: a well-written study background and comprehensive literature review of relevant studies with clear identification of study gaps. The statistical data provided in paragraph one of background should be the USA data. You may specify that these are USA data.

3. Methods: The study methods in term of data source, study population and variables are generally clearly described. You may add the study design such as a retrospective cohort study, and a little information on data collection procedure, who extracted the data, and in what way. Why patients with length of stay >75 days were excluded. Elaborate a bit on what do you mean that "patients with missing predictive variables (n=2685) were excluded." Do these patients miss all predictive variables or some variables?

4. Normally, we include data analysis methods under the section of "Methods". You may move your "Descriptive Analysis and Model Development" to the "Methods" section. Please specify which statistical software you used for data analysis, e.g. SPSS.

5. If possible, please add your IRB reference number.

6. "Variables with p-value less than 0.1 in the bivariate test were included as candidates in the multinomial logistic regression model." Please add a reference for this. Because the cut-off of 0.2 is also sometimes used by the researchers to select explorative independent variables being included in the model.

7. May not need to explain in so detail about the "relative risk ratio" (page 10, line 50 to page 11, line 18), because this is a common knowledge known to the researchers. Just simply go straight to interpret your results will be good enough.

8. The results are generally well-discussed. I am not sure whether the authors have found similar studies being conducted in other countries, and it would be good if you can do some kind of cross-cultural comparison so that the paper can be more interested to the international readers.

9. Good conclusion, maybe a few lines of the study limitations.

Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.
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.

No

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

No

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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

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

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

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