Reviewer's report

Title: Predicting Risk of Hospital and Emergency Department Use for Community Based Elderly Persons through a Secondary Analysis of Cross-National Data

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Reviewer: matthieu de stampa

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'Predicting Risk of Hospital and Emergency Department Use for Community Based Elderly Persons through a Secondary Analysis of Cross-National Data'

John N Morris, Elizabeth P Howard, Knight Stell, Robert Schreiber, Brant E Fries, Lewis A Lipsitz and Beryl Goldman BMC Health Services Research Research article

This is an important topic being considered. Reducing the rate at which elders make visits to emergency departments is a priority of most of the health care systems. Results from the study help us to better understand the complex set of risks factors but we need some clarifications into minor essential revisions.

Introduction:
The question is well defined but objectives are numerous and too ambitious.

Methods:
Where did the elderly population come from before being in the home care programs (community? Hospital?). Were there different types of care programs between countries?
The analytic work needs to be explained. Why the choice of two-thirds of the available cases?
What is the average delay between the baseline assessment and the dependent measures?
The literature review used to identify the broad set of variables and the three domains of interest need to be more explained.

Results:
In the interRAI, the presence of clinical complications is assessed in the last few days. How many days were between the clinical complications and the hospital admissions?
There are too many results and some of them could be remove.

Discussion:
Limitations of the work are not clearly stated. The population of the study is specific (home care programs) and the generalisation to the entire community
based elderly persons is difficult. This restriction should be present in the title.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.