Author's response to reviews

Title: A framework to assess welfare mix and service provision models in health and social welfare: case studies of two prominent Italian regions

Authors:

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Milano, the 30th of December 2014

Dear Editor,

Following your precious suggestions and the remarks and comments of Referee 1, we submit a revised version of our paper “A framework to assess welfare mix and service provision models in health and social welfare: case studies of two prominent Italian regions”. We have worked to include all the elements that were underlined by the editorial board and the Referee, and we think we have substantially improved our paper.

In particular, following the Editorial Requests, we have completed and improved the Ethic statement and Competing Interests section (line 639). As required, we have specified that, for what concerns the collection and use of data concerning Public Institutions, we followed what stated in the Italian national law “Decreto Legislativo 231/2001” (line 268 and 642).

We also added the Acknowledgments section (line 649), as suggested.

To address the concerns expressed by the Referee, we substantially changed the paper structure.

In particular:

1. The Referee highlighted that “in the current structure of the paper it is not completely clear the role of the case studies in the overall research design. I believe you should use these two cases as a way to build, develop and fine-tune the elements of the model”. To solve this possible problem we decided to anticipate the discussion of the case studies (now included immediately after a short presentation of the analytical framework, and after the methods section) and to postpone the discussion of our proposed analytical model after the discussion of the case studies. In this way, we believe that the case studies are more valued and that we allow our readers to have a better understanding of the analytical framework that we propose. These changes also helped us to answer to the Referee second point “the definition of research goals can be improved”: with this new structure, the research goal is clearer throughout the paper.
2. The Referee suggested to include some other references from the existing literature to address some specific concepts and statements: we included all the references that we were asked for, that can be found at the numbers [2], [5], [16], [17].

3. The Referee suggested to improve the conclusion along two dimensions: “how your model is capable to provide useful hints also to managers and policy makers; … the interplay between the six elements of the model”. We rewrote our discussion and conclusions to address these two relevant points: we added a paragraph in the discussion named “A tool box to assess welfare system: policy recommendations and managerial issues” (line 530) to explicitly highlight value created for public managers and policy makers and we included the discourse about the interplay between the six variables in several points (i.e. line 519, 534, 590, 623 and others).

4. The Referee suggested to shorten the paper: we revised the description of the case studies making it more simple and we reduce the paper to 35 pages (starting from 43).

5. The Referee also included some Minor revisions: we addressed all of them with some minor changes in the text (definitions and rewriting of sentences of poor clarity).

To improve the quality of our paper we also went through a complete editing from a mother tongue British English editor. We also revised the abstract for consistency with the new structure of the paper and linguistic editing.

Hoping that you will appreciate our efforts and our work,

Yours faithfully
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