Reviewer’s report

Title: Minimum volume standards in German hospitals. Do they get along with procedure centralization? A retrospective longitudinal data analysis.

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Reviewer: Karyn Stitzenberg

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript is well-written and examines the patterns of care for complex surgical procedures in Germany from 2006-2010. In contrast to other countries, such as the United States, there was more regionalization of procedures in Germany, even prior to the institution of federal volume benchmarks in 2004. This is likely in part why the authors have found essentially no changes over time. It is of course interesting to note that the central government standards appeared to have no effect on actual practice. However, if there was any way the authors could examine more closely the cases that are performed at hospitals that do not meet benchmark standards, that would help us understand whether there is actually still room for improvement or whether there is a certain proportion of cases that simply cannot be regionalized for one reason or another. If there is still room for improvement, then examining those outlier cases could potentially identify targets or strategies for bringing all patients/hospitals into compliance.