Reviewer's report

Title: A Systematic Review of the Magnitude and Cause of Geographic Variation in Unplanned Hospital Admission Rates and Length of Stay for Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions

Version: 2 Date: 30 March 2015

Reviewer: Andrew Wilson

Reviewer's report:

This is a well written and thorough review that tackles an important question. It is a useful summary of the literature, identifying gaps and making useful methodological recommendations for future work.

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. The conclusion section of the abstract should be amended to include only material from the systematic review. Self-management programmes, continuity of primary care, alternatives to admissions and care pathways/guidelines may well have a place but as far as I can see, these suggestions are not evidenced from the studies included in the review.

2. Related to the above, in the results section of the abstract it would be better to say 'suggested' rather than 'cited'.

Minor Essential Revisions
None

Discretionary Revisions
3. It would be useful to know why inclusion criteria included 10 or more geographical units.

4. In tables 1 and 2, penultimate columns, would it be possible to include a symbol to indicate if the tested cause showed a positive, negative or no relationship to admissions/LOS?

5. Although tables 3 and 4 are useful in reporting authors' conclusions, use of language, for example the word 'significantly', can be highly subjective, and this should be mentioned as a limitation.

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.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'