Reviewer’s report

Title: Predicting Inpatient Hospital Payments in the United States: A Retrospective Analysis

Version: 4 Date: 29 June 2015

Reviewer: Paul Barnett

Reviewer’s report:

The substantial revisions respond to the reviewers’ queries. There are few essential edits that need to be addressed, and a few additional discretionary edits that may also be made.

Minor essential revisions.

1. Background, page 4, paragraph 3. The word “providers” should be changed to “payers” so that the sentence reads, “Payments form private _payers_ are not publically available. . .”

2. Page 12, paragraph 3. The word Medicaid should be changed to Medicare so that the sentence refers to “the preponderance of people over age 65 in _Medicare_ based on age-related eligibility.”

3. Page 13, paragraph 3. The amount $1,119 is missing the dollar sign.

4. Page 20, paragraph 2. It is stated that the study by White revealed that hospitals appear to reduce operating costs in response to Medicare prices. Something is missing here. Do the authors mean that they reduce costs in response to Medicare _prices cuts_?

Discretionary revisions

5. Background, page 5, paragraph 3. Strictly speaking, states don’t provide the requisition financial data, they require hospitals provide it. Thus, only 10 of the 46 states contribution to HUCP “require hospitals to report payments.”

6. Page 15, first paragraph. It is stated that the HHI had a significant association with “stays paid.” Do the authors mean that is had a significant association with the PCR?

7. The sentence “in sample RMSE was low than the out of sample RMSE in most cases, as expected,” is not needed.

8. Table 2 has the number of observations as the first row and again as the last row of the table. One of these could be eliminated.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests