Author's response to reviews

Title: Equity impact of a choice reform and change in reimbursement system in primary care in Stockholm County Council

Authors:

Janne Agerholm (janne.agerholm@ki.se)
Daniel Bruce (daniel.bruce@ki.se)
Antonio Ponce de Leon (antonio.ponce.de.leon@ki.se)
Bo Burström (bo.burstrom@ki.se)

Version: 5 Date: 27 July 2015

Author's response to reviews: see over
Equity impact of a choice reform and change in reimbursement system in primary care in Stockholm County Council?

To the Editor,
BMC, Heath Service Research

We would like to thank you for your valuable comments on our manuscript with the title “Equity impact of a choice reform and change in reimbursement system in primary care in Stockholm County Council? (MS: 1179744514165586). We have taken your point about the number of statistical analyses into careful consideration and have chosen to focus on only two of the proposed research questions in order to further align the analyses with the argument and the hypotheses presented in the introduction.

This means that we now focus on differences between groups with different levels of need and between groups living in disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas. We have deepened the analyses in order to highlight that the significant differences we find do not occur by pure chance.

We have tried to further emphasize in the introduction why we think it is important to look at how this reform have affected groups with different health care needs and living in different areas. Our argument is that the financial incentives of this reform encourage clinics to focus on producing many visits, without acknowledging the fact that some visits may demand more time and effort. This also implies that it is more difficult for clinics in more disadvantaged areas to increase their income as the population they serve have more complicated health issues and face more language barriers to communicate with and understand instructions from health care personnel.

Although the statistically significant differences might not seem huge from a clinical perspective, these changes are a sign of a primary care system turning in the wrong direction and going against the goal of the Health Care Act of giving health care on equal terms and according to need. The changes may be small, but it is small changes on a huge scale and therefore we consider that the results of this study are important and meaningful from a policy perspective.

We hope that these changes are satisfactory. We think that your comments have helped us improve the manuscript, and therefore we hope that the manuscript now meets with your approval.

Yours sincerely

Janne Agerholm

(Corresponding author on behalf of the other co-authors)