Reviewer’s report

Title: Readmission rates in non-profit vs. proprietary hospitals before and after the Hospital Readmission Reduction Program Implementation

Version: 0 Date: 05 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Jillian Harvey

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript presents an interesting comparison of readmission rates pre-post the Affordable Care Act (ACA) between not-for-profit and for-profit hospitals. The manuscript is well written and findings support similar research. Using a difference-in-difference study design the authors found that for-profit hospitals have an overall lower readmissions rate, yet the rates declined in both groups pre-post ACA.

My major concern is that it is unclear if the two groups were appropriately matched (which the authors note as a limitation). This could mean that factors other than the intervention may explain the results. Without matching, the analysis may not be sensitive enough to detect an effect. The authors acknowledge that the two groups are different related to case mix and control for these differences. However, it is not clear if there are any unobserved factors that may bias results. These differences may violate a primary assumption of the D&D approach (the trend of the intervention and control groups should be equivalent absent the intervention). However, the authors do disclose this as a major limitation.

The discussion on the differences between the two hospital types and the perceived impact on readmission rates is brief in both the hypothesis section and discussion section. Space permitting, these factors could be further discussed. For example, does the literature suggest for-profit hospitals have additional resources for quality improvement projects or case management? Given the potential changes to ACA and the findings of this study, are there any policy recommendations going forward that should be included in the discussion.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?  
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?  
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No
Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons
CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal

Do you want to get recognition for reviewing this manuscript? Add a record of this review to Publons to track and showcase your reviewing expertise across the world’s journals. Signing up is quick, easy and free!

Yes