Reviewer’s report

Title: Patients' perceptions of interactions with hospital staff are associated with hospital readmissions: A national survey of 4535 hospitals

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Reviewer: Michael Shwartz

Reviewer's report:

Though a relatively straightforward study, the results are quite interesting and the consistency of results across conditions somewhat surprising. I have only a few comments: 1) The paper needs careful copy editing by a native English speaker; 2) I think the authors should put in to the main body of the paper a table that shows the coefficients and p-values for "responsiveness of hospital staff" across the readmission strata for all 6 conditions. These really are the main findings. The full results of the models can still be shown in an Appendix; 3) The authors have found an association and in many places they are careful about their language. However, in other places, strong indications of causality are implied. For example, in the last sentence of the Conclusions, they say "Hospitals can choose approaches to improve the responsiveness of hospital staff as another avenue to address high re-hospitalization rates." A study like this would need replication before suggesting hospitals invest resources and energy in improving responsiveness of hospital staff, which leads to my last suggestion, one that may well be outside the scope of a reasonable revision request. I really think it would be very useful, given the somewhat surprising strength of the conclusions, to repeat this analysis using another year of the HCAHPS data. I would have much more confidence in the results if they were shown to be consistent across 2 years of survey data.

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.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
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Needs some language corrections before being published

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