Reviewer's report

Title: A cross-sectional study assessing the association between online ratings and clinical quality of care measures for US hospitals: Results from an observational study

Version: 0 Date: 07 Feb 2017

Reviewer: Maria Lucia Specchia

Reviewer's report:

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This is an impressive and well written manuscript. This study has identified a full mediator in this population which has significant clinical implications. There are some minor grammatical and spelling errors which need to be addressed and more detail is required in the methods section.

Abstract: Excellent summary of results, however the sentences in lines 7 and 13 are difficult to understand and need to be re-written.

Introduction: This section provides a great background and rationale for the study, but there are some areas which can be improved. Page 3, line 38 change 'extant' to 'existing'. It is important to refer to studies which report the impact of caregivers being unable to work due to caring responsibilities, and how much money is being saved by family carers compared to employing professional carers. It would interesting to understand why the authors focus on perceived social support in comparison to objective social networks. The paragraph starting on page 5 line 86, would be better suited to the end of the introduction. Furthermore, this paragraph would benefit from an additional sentence which describes how these findings could be used to improve outcomes, such as developing targeted intervention for those with low perceived social support. The purpose of the study and hypotheses should remain in the introduction section, however it may be better to include the definitions of mediation, and moderation along with the conceptual models in the methods section.

Methods: If possible it would be interesting to conduct separate analyses based on different types of mental illness, or use this variable as a confounder in order to identify whether social support becomes a stronger/weaker moderator/mediator. Please include how you calculated the
interaction effect for each model. Please justify why you used the bootstrapping method and why you used the 1,000 sample. A sentence describing the assumption checks of multicolinearity, normality, linearity and homoscedasticity are required to ensure the data does not violate any of these assumptions. Please describe what criteria you followed for the mediation and moderation analysis. In the past I have utilised Baron and Kenny’s 1986 criteria to assess partial and full mediation. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to highlight the change in R squared to identify whether the interaction term explains any additional variance.

Results: It would be valuable to distinguish between the different types of mental and physical illnesses of those involved in the study. The results are well presented.
Discussion: This section is well written, great summary of results and comprehensive list of limitations. Future research should focus on length of caring as a potential confounder, types of carer (spousal/non-spousal), and also differentiating between different types of mental illness.

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.
Yes

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