Reviewer’s report

Title: Patient consultation rate and clinical and NHS outcomes: a cross-sectional analysis of English primary care data from 2.7 million patients in 238 practices

Version: 0 Date: 11 Feb 2019

Reviewer: Aneez Esmail

Reviewer's report:

This is a paper that uses well-established methods for assessing aspects of GP care and service provision. The CPRD is increasingly being used to study associations between routinely collected data - primarily for administrative and payments - and clinical outcomes. In this respect it suffers from the same problems of all such data sets in that these are observational data and that apart from highlighting associations, they cannot be used to make comments about real relationships. The authors do acknowledge this in both the discussion and the conclusion of the paper. I would like to see some reference in the abstract that this is purely a hypothesis generating paper and that no reliable conclusions can be drawn from the data but this is a relatively minor point. It could be easily addressed.

The authors have published important work in this area and the methods have credibility. They also identify flaws in the conclusions that they can draw from the data and they deserve credit for this. Papers of this type will be important because they identify problems in using the CPRD for assessing outcomes.

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.

Unable to assess

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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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