Reviewer’s report

Title: The strategic case for establishing public-private partnerships in cancer care

Version: 2
Date: 14 April 2015

Reviewer: Richard Warnecke

Reviewer’s report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The question posed by the authors is very well defined. However, it is a case study of a pilot study conducted in ten hospitals or hospital systems which may limit its value to a larger audience.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

I think more needs to be said in the conclusion of the paper about the potential value of what is reported to the field. The data on two of the dimensions of interest, Market Share and Physician recruitment, do not show any association with the degree of private investment by the participating health care provider sites which seems to be a key outcome. The small sample size and the time that it takes to recruit and integrate new providers is acknowledged but there is not much discussion about the various aspects of the data that influence the outcome of limited association with the variable of most interest. One notable problem with ascertaining impact is the considerable variation among the centers on each factor. So the overall of averages on them are considerably misleading.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

The analysis is very well done considering the small sample size but the findings are limited by the distribution across the three areas of interest.

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?

Yes.

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? Yes

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

I think the discussion and conclusions could use more discussion of the data in terms of what makes this analysis of importance to health services research and understanding of organizational innovation and change.

7. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes.
8. Is the writing acceptable? Overall, this paper is clear and well-written. The authors did a good job given the limitations of the data. However, I think more needs to be said about relevance to the field. More discussion of other findings consistent or maybe.

• Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

More needs to be said about the relevance and value of this small case study to the field of health services research. How are the limited findings relevant to readers? How do these findings compare with other work that has been done or suggest more that needs to be done.

• Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

• Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I was a member of the External Advisory Board to this project. However, we did not discuss issues relevant to this analysis.