Reviewer's report

Title: Use of ward closure to control outbreaks among hospitalized patients in acute care settings: A systematic review

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Reviewer: Sonja Hansen

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The manuscript "Use of ward closure to control outbreaks among hospitalized patients in acute care settings: A systematic review" by Wong et al. analyses the evidence for the measure "ward closure" in an outbreak setting.

Regrettably the authors do not debate the pathogens' transmissibility which is the basis for all measures in infection prevention and control. E.g., foodborne transmission has to be faced different to airborne transmission. The different transmission modes should be considered rather than just categorizing studies in accordance to the affected body site (table 1-5).

Ward closure as "the last option" of solving potentially severe problems has to be debated more differentially and not recommended as a measure that "should not be actively encouraged or enacted as a formal policy, particularly considering the challenges that it can produce in the context of limited bed capacity" as concluded by the authors in the last paragraph of the results section.

This paper may have identified a high number of outbreak descriptions but it should focus more on practical relevance and consider infection control expertise.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.