Reviewer’s report

Title: Variations in bariatric surgical care pathways: a national costing study on the variability of services and impact on costs

Version: 2 Date: 10 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Anne Rudisill

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

The revised manuscript takes into consideration the requested points and presents an improvement on the last version. The area where I would suggest that the authors re-visit is the discussion page 6. lines 162-179. The authors make excellent points in the final paragraph of the discussion section (page 7) which really capture why this article is important. The importance of lines 162-170 are then negated in lines 174-177.

This paper adds an important aspect to our understanding of costs of bariatric surgery but would be improved by focusing perhaps in that paragraph on highlighting how variable these figures are and although they may not change a CEA decision, they do matter for payers, hospital resource use and more local level decision-making. This point has not really been brought up in this paper but those settings perhaps meeting the same outcomes but spending the same or less are saving their systems' budgets. This paper helps highlight difference in costs in what may be relatively homogenous settings (not sure about this but authors would know) and therefore that difference alone matters and should be highlighted. That is an interesting and important cost argument here.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this contribution to the literature

Caroline
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

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 am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
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I have conducted research on the health economics of bariatric surgery but no competing interests otherwise.

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