Reviewer’s report

Title: Systematic Overview of Freedom of Information Act Requests to the Department of Health and Human Services from 2008 to 2017

Version: 0 Date: 27 May 2019

Reviewer: Cole Wayant

Reviewer's report:

Authors,

Thank you for the opportunity to review this wonderfully simple and powerful manuscript. I always enjoy reading papers that ask small questions with large implications. I believe your introduction is great. The discussion recommendations are in line with your findings. I do not see any forms of bias that may compromise the integrity of the work. Because this manuscript is aggregating publicly available data and there are not many analytical decisions that were required, I have only a one minor point.

1. What was the rationale for the processing time categories? 1-20 days is straightforward because of the statutory requirement, but 21-60 and 61+ are less straightforward. My only concern is that unequal time groups may visually skew your findings. For example, if an agency commonly responds to complex requests in less than 30 days, this information may be diluted if the category extends all the way to 60 days. If a rationale exists, please provide it.

Signed: Cole Wayant, Oklahoma State University Center for Health Sciences, Tulsa, OK, USA

Level of interest
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An exceptional article

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

Acceptable

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