Reviewer's report

Title: Improving patient notification of abdominal viscera incidental findings with a standardized protocol

Version: 1 Date: 11 June 2014

Reviewer: Pauline Park

Reviewer's report:

This study addresses an important aspect of trauma patient care, namely the management of incidental radiographic abnormalities discovered during the initial trauma evaluation. While these findings may have clinical significance, further workup is often overshadowed by the acute care needs and follow-up rates reported in the literature are low.

The authors report on a quality improvement initiative aimed at improving the rate of patient notification after discovery of an unanticipated radiographic finding. Evaluation was performed before and after implementation of an inpatient clinical protocol directed at management of incidental CT findings of the abdominal solid organs. They observed a substantial improvement in patient notification rates between the two periods (80% increase, from 17.7% to 32.4%).

The manuscript is clearly written and demonstrates the impact of directed quality improvement on Trauma Program processes.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) More detail on the specific protocol and its implementation would enhance the manuscript. Were additional resources or specific individuals dedicated to executing the protocol?

2) The authors mention that many lesions captured within the study were deemed clinically insignificant, benign or not requiring followup, possibly impacting the notification rates. Were notification rates higher in cases felt to be clinically significant?

3) Despite improvement in notification rates, the authors acknowledge that further work can be done. Any specific recommendations from their experience would be of value to the readership.

Minor Essential Revisions

1) Abdominal solid organ findings were the focus of the study, consider clarifying in title.

2) Could Table 1 and Table 2 be consolidated?
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

None