



January 15, 2014

Statement regarding Journal of Hospital Medicine report, *Hospital patient safety grades may misrepresent hospital performance*

Leah Binder, President & CEO, The Leapfrog Group

On January 13, 2014, the Journal of Hospital Medicine published a report titled [Hospital patient safety grades may misrepresent hospital performance](#). The article suggests that hospitals that did not participate in the voluntary [Leapfrog Hospital Survey](#) would have received a better [Hospital Safety Score](#) if they had chosen to participate.

Although Leapfrog welcomes continued transparent analysis of the Hospital Safety Score in peer reviewed literature, we do believe the journal should have required the authors to be clearer throughout the manuscript that their findings were not statistically significant.

Specifically, on page 4 of the manuscript the authors state that the study finds no statistically significant difference between the Hospital Safety Scores of its selected sample of hospitals that participate in the Leapfrog Hospital Survey versus its selected sample of nonparticipating hospitals. The authors state that despite the lack of statistical significance in their own results, Leapfrog's cutpoints for the letter grades were also not determined with attention to statistical significance. We regret the authors did not consult with Leapfrog in the course of their study, because in fact Leapfrog did analyze the significance of the cutpoints and adjusted each cutpoint down by three standard errors. Leapfrog will update its documentation to better reflect the adjustment made.

We also have some concerns about the methodology of this study. The authors selected their study population by using the US News's "Best Hospitals" list. US News rankings are intended to identify the best hospitals for the most complex patients, and do not place a specific focus on patient safety; Leapfrog's Hospital Safety Score is particularly focused on patient safety. Thus the choice of the study population may be comparing hospitals with different strengths and weaknesses.

In addition, the authors make assumptions about how 17 hospitals would have performed if they had completed the Leapfrog Hospital Survey, and assume Leapfrog makes similarly arbitrary assumptions about non-reporting hospitals. That is not the case. Scores for non-survey responders were imputed by calculating scores for hospitals for which data were available for both primary and secondary data sources. We will gladly share the results of that analysis with the study's authors.

Again, we welcome well-founded evaluation of the Hospital Safety Score, and welcome others to conduct scientific analyses of the score's methodology.