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Letter to the Editor:
Putting Issues in Context

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Letter to the Editor: Putting Issues in Context

I read with interest the September 2005 Health Policy Newsletter. Although, I agree with some conclusions in the article on "Hips and Knees", there are a number of areas where the editor could have done a better job putting the overall issues in context. For example, when you comment on the untoward consequences of readmission rates due to deep joint infections or device problems, you point out the "cost" of \$30 million dollars in charges. As I'm sure you are aware, charges do not relate to either the payments to hospitals and physicians nor the actual cost of providing services. Your use of charges overstates by a significant amount the cost consequences of these readmissions. It is clear that all of us can, should, and will strive to do better tomorrow than we are doing today. However, it is incumbent on the individuals writing about healthcare quality issues to make sure that context of information is clear.

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