2)    Were diagnoses only included if they were in the primary position,  
ie., if they were the most likely cause of admission? If not, discuss the  
implications of including patients where a different diagnosis was the cause  
of admission. In what percentage was epilepsy coded in the primary position?

In this study, the patient files were included if diagnoses were both in either the primary position and as an additional diagnosis. Additional diagnoses and procedures were included to identify potential co-morbidities and adjuvant treatments to TLE.

Even if the analysis was done with looking only at patients with epilepsy in the primary position, the study’s results still hold as the proportion of the number of primary diagnoses / all diagnoses remain steady throughout the time period.

TLE proportions (data in primaryTrends.xls)

For TLE patients, the vast majority instances, epilepsy was identified as the primary diagnoses (95.5% as 345.51 or 345.41). Some of the other primary diagnoses included "2250 " = "2250 : BENIGN NEOPLASM BRAIN" and "1912 " = "1912 : MAL NEO TEMPORAL LOBE" with epilepsy as a secondary diagnoses. Regardless, there is no time dependent trend in the proportion as primary diagnosis and the number of TLEs done if only looking at primary diagnoses is the same.

nonTLE proportions (data in primaryTrends.xls)

There is a consistently lower proportion of nonTLE epilepsy cases as the primary diagnoses which can be consistent with multiple hospital visits. TLE by definition would only occur once and would be warranted for a diagnosis of epilepsy, whereas inpatient visits of another nature for patients secondarily to epilepsy can occur for many reasons.

There is a slight positive trend over time, which can be the result of more inpatient visits for epilepsy above a background of a constant level of other hospitalization reasons. This can be the result of more inpatient therapies for epilepsies or more frequent visits, but purely conjecture on my part.

Additionally, the TLE ratio and nonTLE ratio seems to track each other fairly well, so there should not be any underlying artifacts that skew the general conclusion.

