Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of a decision-support tool on data-informed decision making in Kenya: a qualitative investigation

Version: 1 Date: 13 June 2013

Reviewer: Alan Johnston

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Pages 1 - 8 imply that the DHP tool covers the health sector at the district level in a comprehensive manner. Only when you review Figure 1 and get to page 9 of the paper does it become evident that the DHP is primarily focused on HIV/AIDS, with a little information on family planning. It is essential that you be more up-front with this fact (the focus on HIV-AIDS) in the introductory sections.

Discretionary Revisions

1. I strongly recommend that you consider a change to the title of the paper. This study refers specifically to a district-level activity. See for example paragraph 2 on page 5. I would suggest adding decision making "at the district level" in Kenya. If the title is too long, you could remove the words "data-informed."

2. The paper is very well written and requires little revision. a few minor points are mentioned below.

3. In mentioning the issue of data quality (paragraph 2, page 4 and paragraph 2, page 8) you mention several ways of improving the data input process and preparing graphic outputs. Question 11 in Figure 1 also addresses the issue of data completeness. But there is also a problem of lack of trust in the underlying data. This refers to the basic accuracy of the data being collected. Do you have any comments on this?

4. Formatting to the notes to the references: either do or don't include a space after the comma when there are multiple numbers).

5. Page 6, paragraph 2 should include a note as to the time period of this study.

6. Last line, page 6. "the national HIS described above". It should say "mentioned" above, because you don't really describe it. This is a fairly major issue, since it is only on page 17 that the DHIS is mentioned, and in only two sentences. Since this is a competing system, and seems likely to be a sustainable one, perhaps you should spend more time describing it and talking
about the relationship to DHP. Page 6 might be a good place to do this.

7. In the description of the DHP tool (pages 7 and 8) you make no mention of how the data is accessed at the district. Is this a web-based tool? Is it password protected? Who has access? Or is it sent by diskette or flash drive on a monthly basis? Please describe how it is distributed.

7. You may wish to say something about the future. Given the emergence of the DHIS, can DHP be integrated with that system? Are there reasons why it could not be? Is there a rationale for a separate stand-alone tool?

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:

I declare that I have no competing interests.