Reviewer's report

Title: Evaluation of alternate outreach models for cataract services in rural Nepal

Version: 2 Date: 31 August 2009

Reviewer: Steven Kymes

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review this much improved manuscript. I retain a few concerns that if addressed will substantially improve this work.

1) The author's assertion that there is a "small" (9%) change in the age distribution of the sample is based upon an error. There is indeed a shift of 9% of the total sample from older people to younger people, but that is overall. Among the older people, there was a 236 person reduction (22%) in the number served, and among younger people there was a 245 person increase (64%). The authors may be correct that this is a good thing as it means people are having visual impairment addressed earlier, but why their program change would affect this is unclear.

2) In particular, as Reviewer #1 pointed out, the drop in older people served represents a major equity concern. While the authors have tried to address this in a paragraph of their revision, I remain unconvinced that they have truly come to grips with the potential that their new program has placed a barrier to older people accessing care. They say they have data to show that in the new year that this disparity has reversed, if so, they may want to present it to provide a convincing argument that their new program did not adversely affect older people in their communities.

3) In Table 4, the present the visual acuity data. It would make things much more clear if they referred to "worse" and "better" than rather than < and >. Also, they have the same problem here in confusing their column percentages (distribution) and row percentage (actual percentage increase and decrease).

This is a much improved paper, but I feel they still need to come to candidly address the potential equity issue that has arisen and not argue that it is small (which it clearly is not, and they have moved to address this), nor that it is transitory unless they can present evidence that is the case.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

No competing interests.