Reviewer’s report

Title: Mapping of health system functions to target capacity strengthening of high priority public health programs. The case of maternal health in Mexico.

Version: 1 Date: 7 October 2010

Reviewer: Maria Pia Fantini

Reviewer’s report:

Minor essential revisions

The aim of the paper is to analyse the characteristics of tacit knowledge on which health personnel in tactical and strategic positions rely to address maternal health objectives, using concept mapping.

While the question is well posed and the methods sound, the results are provided with a level of detail that would be more appropriate for an internal report than for an international audience.

1. I would suggest presenting data at the national level and omit comparisons between Mexican states throughout the paper and in the Tables.

2. In the second paragraph of the results and in the abstract, the authors mention the inverse correlation between importance of functions and the feasibility of strengthening them. Because the correlation coefficient is negative but very weak in absolute value (-0.14), the relationship between importance and feasibility should be interpreted accordingly. The authors should therefore tone down the sentence ‘This means that the more important the function is perceived to be by the community of practice, the less feasible is its perceived solution’, which suggest a strong inverse relationship between importance and feasibility. In the text, line 11, ‘not in Table 2' can be omitted.

3. The last paragraph of the discussion on the frequency of mention of the six functions should be moved to the results section.

4. There are some typos to fix: ‘purposively’ and ‘community or practice’ in the methods, ‘such features are frequent absence’ in the conclusions.

Discretionary revisions

Table 6 is not cited in the text. I would suggest to omit it.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests