Reviewer's report

Title: Does the distribution of health care benefits in Kenya meet the principles of universal coverage?

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Reviewer: Vasoontara Yiengprugsawan

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript examines the distribution of health care benefits in Kenya according to the principles of universal coverage. This study investigates cross-sectional data at two time points (2003 and 2007). I have a few comments as follows:

Major Compulsory Revisions:

1) Page 7 , Methods—“Data were obtained from nationally representative cross-sectional household surveys conducted by the Ministry of Public Health in 2003 and 2007.” Could the authors clarify whether this study has applied population weight in the analyses?

2) Page 7-8, Methods— “Data on outpatient visits were collected using a four-week recall period (p.7)... Outpatient utilization rates were converted into annual utilization by multiplying by 13 (p.8)...” I have concerns regarding this conversion as I would assume many respondents may report ‘0’ outpatient utilization in the past four weeks but to convert this to annual rate would generate ‘0’ in the past 12 months. This could underestimate the overall outpatient utilization rates. Could the authors clarify or make reference to previous literature using such approach?

Minor Essential Revisions:

3) Page 10, Results—“Private for-profit sector benefits showed a wider pro-rich distribution with richest quintile receiving 40.5% and 45.5% of outpatient and inpatient benefits in 2007.” I think the authors meant 40.3% for outpatient, please double check Table 3.

4) Page 11, Results—Figure 4, the authors showed that the share of self-assessed need differed significantly across socioeconomic groups in 2003 but not in 2007. How about the distribution of share of benefits, do these differ statistically across socioeconomic groups in either of the years investigated?

Discretionary Revisions:

5) Figure 1—it would be useful to include 2007 at the end of the title to facilitate the readers (footnote 2 indicates that data on hospital category were not available for the 2003 survey).
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.