Reviewer’s report

Title: Strengthening M&E and building sustainable health information systems in resource limited countries: lessons learned from an M&E task-shifting initiative in Botswana

Version: 1 Date: 22 February 2014

Reviewer: Stephanie Davis

Reviewer’s report:

This paper is well-written, clearly organized, and reports on a valuable M&E project.

Major compulsory revisions:
1. Please provide a bit of background about what the M&E responsibilities and if possible, challenges, of the previously responsible cadre were before the project, so that readers can understand the changes in context.
2. Please specify the sampling approach in more detail.
   o Individual interviews: Were 18 people sought for individual interviews because they constituted every person closely involved in development/implementation? If not, why were only 18 sought and what other criteria were used to select them?
   o Focus groups: Does convenience sampling refer to the choice of districts, or the choice of participants within the districts, or both? This appears to be a two-stage sampling procedure; please specify how selections were made at each stage, including response rates if possible.

Minor Essential Revisions:
3. Please specify how many district M&E officers took initial contract positions and whether they were distributed one per district or more/less.

Discretionary Revisions:
4. If any responses were collected addressing whether the number of M&E officers per district was sufficient for the primary goals of the project, or whether a smaller or larger cadre would have been ideal, this would be valuable information for others trying to replicate this program.
5. As this project is introduced as a task-shifting approach, it would be helpful to make it clear earlier in the paper (when task-shifting is introduced) what cadre the tasks were shifted from.

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.