Reviewer's report

Title: What training is needed to study the causes of health inequalities in my country? Perspectives from health and demographic researchers in eight African and Asian countries

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Reviewer: Katia Mohindra

Reviewer's report:

This paper contributes an innovative and rigorous approach to developing a better understanding of how to strengthen capacities in LMIC researchers in the domain of health equity and the social determinants of health. I only have two major comments, plus a few minor comments and suggestions. Note that I could not open the additional file.

Major comments

1. Although the approach does systematically tap into real needs of researchers in LMICs for their own thoughts on training needs for health equity and SDH, it remains a Northern-centric approach as there was no attempt (in my reading of the article) to elicit LMIC views on how they can also contribute to training in advancing health equity and SDH. This kind of information could contribute to, for example, highlighting potential South-South collaborations, such as between African and Asian teams. Perhaps this can be considered a study limitation...

2. Given the nature of global health research (notably the need for collaborative partnerships across various countries) as well as the increasing constraint on resources (notably for work related to SDH) and the need to reduce our environmental footprint, I think that the approach used by the authors is a very interesting approach (i.e. avoids large conferences overseas, travel budgets, etc.); therefore, a discussion that highlights not only the challenges or limitations of the approach (which is already done by the authors) but also explores the trade-offs between doing such an approach virtually versus in-person could help other researchers decide to use a virtual approach - or not (i.e., do you think this study would have been much stronger if done in person?)

Minor comments

1. The abstract needs some editing, including specifying for whom Health equity "is a global policy priority" as is done in the text - important to clarify this.

2. Can you expand on how a variety of researchers were sampled and a more in-depth description of the participants, just a line or two describing key aspects for what you have in the table 1.

3. Line 93, the authors write that suggest that systematic reviews have shown that there is little evidence linking SDH and health outcomes, yet they have not actually cited systematic review studies.
4. Lines 101-102, I am not clear on why there is a need for "specific SDH training programs", as opposed to public health training programs (which do exist in many LMICs) with SDH content - although I would agree that this needs strengthening.

5. Line 168 "select a good variety of participants", needs rephrasing.

6. Line 192, delete one of the "only" in the sentence.

7. Line 263, delete underscore.

8. Table 3, please check the table to make sure all the data is correctly aligned.

Discretionary comments

1. I would suggest changing the title. I originally thought that the authors would be from LMICs describing their own views, later in the methods, I now understand where the title comes from, but I still find it confusing/uninteresting.

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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'