Reviewer's report

Title: Chronic diseases and multi-morbidity - a conceptual framework for countries in health transition

Version: 2
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Reviewer: carmel martin

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The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached.

The Case Study body presents a framework largely derived from other works and appropriately referenced. However, it does not add any depth to the conceptual framework or model in the short ‘results’ body of the paper. The discussion has all the material that demonstrates how South Africa currently is implementing, starting to implement or might implement the framework. These demonstrations are bundled together under broad headings from the framework. This is the key work and results of the paper and should be in the results body of the paper.

In the results section, there needs to be a revision with further teasing out of different health system levels that the framework applies to. For example, disease-disease can operate at a population level, or a local level, or an individual level.

Another point and perhaps what is lacking from the paper and literature review is the patient experience, rather than the total emphasis on disease and working to manage multiple diseases which is the main point of this paper. There is no extension or development of the cumulative complexity model. In this paper, the framework appears to equate complexity with a mixed bag. Areas that could do with more development include illness experience, urgency, seriousness, inappropriate clinical management split into disease silos, health financing that has been driven by single diseases etc. While poly pharmacy is a problem for the patients, it is the responsibility of the prescriber and the health services that makes the drugs available and it is a global as well as an individual problem.

In my opinion, this is potentially a very good paper, but requires more work and perhaps another diagram of the conceptual domains of the cumulative complexity model against micro-, meso- and macro-level strategies, policies, services and programs with ideas for future development.

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 have no competing interests.