Reviewer's report

Title: The New Middle Level Health Workers Training in the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia: Student's Perspective.

Authors:
Haileyesus Getahun (ghaileye@yahoo.com)
Hanna Yirga (hanayirga@hotmail.com)
Daniel Argaw (daniargaw@hotmail.com)

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Reviewer: Prof James Rourke

Level of interest: A paper whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Advice on publication: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the compulsory revisions

Review: The New Middle Level Health Workers Training in the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia: Student's Perspective.

This paper will be of interest to those who are involved in programs to educate and utilize field health workers in undeveloped and developing countries. This paper reports a survey done of students at the completion of a one year field health worker training program. The methodology is satisfactory but the manuscript will require major revision before it could be considered for publication. I will comment on each section of the manuscript.

Abstract Section: The critical finding of inadequate time for theory, practice, and inadequate teaching materials needs to be listed in the abstract results. The abstract conclusion needs to clearly state this and the second sentence in the conclusion should be rewritten to reflect this. The following wording is suggested as an example: "The students in this study found that the duration of training, the time for theory and practice, the availability to teach materials, the course contents and their teachers to be inadequate. This study would suggest that the current program has serious inadequacies that need to be addressed."

Introduction Section: The Introduction is concise and would benefit from a pertinent literature review of other programs to train field health workers for similar context. The second sentence comments on the current health policy of Ethiopia and yet quotes a 1993 reference. The first sentence of the second paragraph should either be rewritten or have the phase "with different capacities dropped".

Subjects & Methods Section: The study design is appropriate and appropriately described. The response rate of 145 of 219, 66% is satisfactory.

Results Section: There should be a more complete description of the "language capacity, pedagogic skills, and knowledge of the teachers" as only the percent rated as "very good" is listed. Including "good" and "satisfactory" would draw a more complete picture. The final paragraph indicates the "Lack
of confidence of being competent after completion of training was demonstrated in 12% respondants”. This is a report of a survey and it should say "stated" rather than "demonstrated" as there was no objective study or field examination. This applies to the wording in the abstract as well.

Discussion Section: The fist paragraph deals with study limitations. Another study limitation that needs to be noted is that this was a survey of students' assessment of their training and competence and does not include an objective examination or field measure. The second paragraph should be rewritten and could be moved to the introduction section.

I feel this paper warrants further revision as it addresses the need to train middle level field health workers that is relevant for many countries throughout in the world. I would need to review the revised version before recommending publication.

Sincerely,

Professor James Rourke

Competing interests:

None declared.