Author's response to reviews

Title: "Issues of equity are also issues of rights": Lessons from experiences in Southern Africa

Authors:

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Dr Hoffman

Response to Reviewers: MS: 8110379911135953 - "Issues of equity are also issues of rights": Lessons from experiences in Southern Africa

Thank you for the reviewers’ feedback on the manuscript 8110379911135953 - "Issues of equity are also issues of rights": Lessons from experiences in Southern Africa.

Both reviewers have pointed our editing and typographical errors in the manuscript which have been corrected throughout. I trust this meets the recommendation to provide “rigorous editing to complete missing words, eliminate repetition of words in close proximity.”

In particular, errors identified by Reviewer (Bernard Dickens) have been corrected:

- deletion of ‘therefore’ following reference 41
- deletion of ‘for example’ following reference 52
- the sentence preceding reference 23 has been corrected ("around the of antiretrovirals to, in which..."
- Formatting errors involving italicisation of themes headings have been corrected

I have also added the reviewer’s comment on third generation rights to the definition of human rights in Table 2, although I have refrained from using the language of ‘generations’ because there is much dispute about the language and it is not directly germane to the research question.
I agree entirely with the comment that “The supposition that human rights apply only at the individual level is an impoverished reading ...” and this point is made very clearly throughout the manuscript and particularly in the conclusion of the paper. I did not see the need to amplify this point any more than is already made in the paper.

Errors identified by Reviewer (Kris Heggenhougen) have been corrected:
- “from of” and other such elisions and omissions have been corrected (e.g. page 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13
- The text on page 11 ("...public health attention is increasing returning to reviving...)" has been rewritten
- I have amended the text in the conclusion both in the main body of the manuscript and the abstract to read more simply and clearly, as recommended.
- I have made clearer what is meant by “organizational members” in the methods section by rewriting the narrative. (page 5)
- Provided a brief explanation as to why the Malawian Patients Rights Charter process was arrested when handed to government, as suggested. (page 7)
- Provided a brief explanation on the National AIDS levy in Zimbabwe, as suggested. (page 8)
- Edited the text at the foot of page 11 to make the language clearer regarding how community agency operated in the three case studies.
- Reworded the text on page 12 to be clearer about community agency being re-investigated in public health by referring to a broader public health community as the subject of the sentence.
- On page 12, I have added a sentence to acknowledge the point made regarding the state abrogating its responsibilities, as suggested.
- Shortened what is included from the quote on page 14 to make it read more easily.
- Replaced “liability for” with “obligation to provide” on page 14, as requested.
- Corrected the source for General Comment 14 referring to the relevant United Nations Committee.

What I have not changed:
- I have not amended the text on page 9 identified by Kris Heggenhougen ("...a seminal case highlighting the justiciability of...") because there is no real substitute for the term “justiciability” and it is being widely applied and used in the health and human rights literature. The sentence language is quite intelligible.
- Kris Heggenhougen also suggested that I should define early on a working definition of human rights, but this is done in Table 2 which appears in the methods section, well before the results. As pointed out in the text of the manuscript in the methods section, definitions are important, hence they are made explicit in the table. I have therefore not added any more text at the point the reviewer made this suggestion (outline of the aim of the study). However, because of his concerns, I have added a sentence in the definition of human rights to make clear that human rights are indivisible, including both civil and political, and socio-economic rights.
• The narrative on the Doha negotiations and the collaboration between NGOs and governments seems quite clear to me, so I have not elaborated. Readers have a reference to consult if they want more information.
• I have kept Figure 1 because it speaks to the text of the results and discussion. The first reviewer did not question the figure and I believe it is essential to conceptualising the model derived from the study.

I trust these revisions meet your expectations with regard to the paper.

Many thanks for your helpful assistance to date.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

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