Reviewer's report

Title: Inputs to Quality: Supervision, Management, and Community Involvement in Health Facilities in Egypt in 2004

Version: 2 Date: 4 April 2011

Reviewer: Wolfgang Hoffmann

Reviewer's report:

This paper describes a cross-sectional analysis of key management practices in government-owned healthcare facilities in Egypt. The study is based on a survey in 2004. The key management practices are used as indicators for the quality of the healthcare facilities. The paper gives an interesting overview, especially about differences in key management practices between urban and rural regions in Egypt in 2004.

Major compulsory revisions:

- To understand and interpret the survey data presented, more information about the structure and organization of the Egyptian healthcare system is needed. Are all hospitals and health units public? Is there a parallel system of private healthcare facilities? If yes, do those also receive governmental supervision? How have those been included?

- Do health insurances exist?

- The fact that the study includes government-owned facilities is mentioned initially in the discussion, this should be moved into the method-section.

- Please describe/define “rural health units” and “MCH/urban health units” more precisely.

- It is stated, that Egypt is a “land in transition”. What does this mean? Please define which parameters are changing (economical? political? cultural? all?) Are there differences in the stage or speed of development between different regions?

- It is remarkable, that only 7% of the hospitals in the sample is located in urban Egypt, since about 20% of the Egyptian inhabitants live in urban regions. Do you have an explanation for this? Is it differential response?

- To enable readers to interpret the results better, some comparisons with the
healthcare systems in other countries in a comparable stage of development would be useful.

-One of the parameters used in the study is external supervision in the last 6 months. Results of this supervision are not presented, they should be integrated in the study.

-Please provide response proportions. What percentage of all institutions in Egypt are represented in the sample?

-It is stated in the discussion, that there are limitations regarding the data. Can you make recommendations how to improve data collection in the future?

-During the last few months, large political changes were happening in Egypt. It would be interesting to add a few words about possible impact of these changes on the development of the healthcare system.

Minor revisions:
-Discussion, page 10: external supervision in the last 6 months is not the same as every 6 months

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

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