Reviewer's report

Title: Institutional Public Private Partnerships for Core Health Services: Evidence from Italy.

Version: 1 Date: 16 November 2010

Reviewer: Jennifer Gosling

Reviewer's report:

I thought this was an interesting paper and certainly worth publication in order to gain a readership.

However, I'm not sure that both research questions were answered. There was a lack of theoretical discussion about why PPP and not just public and some of the issues surrounding the different agendas and drivers of private rather than public companies. I liked the idea of taking a self-contained region and looking at what was happening within it, but was not clear about the impact of national policies or regional political culture which might have affected the decisions taken around PPP.

As the paper stands, I think it is interesting, easy to read (with a few minor corrections to the English) - it flows well and makes a useful contribution to debates and research in this area. The authors are correct that organisational aspects of PPPs are certainly under reported, if not under researched. I think it could be improved by a broader or more in-depth discussion of existing literature and/or theory in this area to underpin it, but that may be outwith BMC article criteria. I would like to see a longer, more critical article emerging from the research, but this is a good 'taster'. It also raises interesting questions about further research that could be done in this area.

(I may be being ethno-centric, but, being from the UK, I found it distracting when the authors referred to the NHS, meaning the Italian health system. It would seem more logical to refer to it as SSN (Sistema Sanitario Nazionale) which they do on pg 6.)

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.