Reviewer's report

Title: Health worker preferences for community-based health insurance payment mechanisms: a discrete choice experiment

Version: 3 Date: 6 March 2012

Reviewer: Laura Ternent

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript examines health worker preferences for community-based health insurance payment mechanisms in Nouna, Burkina faso using a discrete choice experiment.

The question posed by the researchers is well defined, the methods are appropriate and generally well described. The data appears sound and sources of work which they build upon are acknowledged.

I have a number of minor revisions which could be made to the manuscript.

1. Whilst acknowledging that space is limited the methods could be better described in the methods section of the abstract.

2. There seems to be a general lack of references in the introduction section. E.g. pg7 when discussing payment systems in Nouna, Pg8 when discussing dropout rates for CBI, pg 9 when discussing RBF and its links to CBI coverage etc.

3 More information should be provided on the design of the DCE. In particular, more information in relation to the focus groups should be provided. How many focus groups were conducted? Who made up these focus groups? How did the authors produce the list of candidate attributes? How this was long list of attributes narrowed down to 6? How were the levels of the attributes decided?

4 On pg 14 it is stated that the design of the DCE maximised utility balance. How do the authors know this? Do the authors have a priori information on parameter estimates? This should be expanded upon.

5. Pg 15 the authors state that minor revisions were made to the questionnaire after pre-testing. Briefly expand on what these revisions were.

6. Small error in Table 3 male = 59% not 58%

7. Pg 21 the authors state that DCEs are ‘a cost-effective way of obtaining data’. Cost-effective in comparison to what?

8. Pg 21. DCEs have been used previously to elicit employment preferences of health workers in low and middle income countries. This literature should be acknowledged e.g. Mangham and Hanson (2008), Chomitz (1998) Blaauw et al (2010), Largarde et al (2009).
9. Pg 24 the authors state that payment preferences for head nurses were significantly different from other health workers. The numbers in each sample should be stated. Also this should be highlighted in the limitations of the study, given a relatively small sample size. The conclusions from this sub-analysis should be toned down given that the sample size is small.

Major comments:
1. No limitations of the work are stated. This section should be added and should address issues such as sample size, the large numbers of choice sets presented to respondents, issues of inducing bias given that respondent were given 10 days to complete the questionnaire etc.

Other comments:
1. Quality of written English: the writing is acceptable but would benefit from editing to ensure that the appropriate academic style is adhered to throughout the manuscript.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests