Reviewer's report

Title: Use of Health Systems Evidence by Policymakers in Eastern Mediterranean Countries: Views, Practices, and Contextual Influences

Version: 1 Date: 12 December 2011

Reviewer: Elizabeth Bradley

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Use of Health Systems Evidence…

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
Yes, the question is well defined – to determine how policymakers use health systems evidence in their health policy making and what might be barriers and facilitators to using it more effectively.

The question is of importance

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
I found wanting more detail on the sampling frame and an analysis of the weaknesses of the sample. Most readers will not read ref 27 so authors should describe this.

I was worried about the quite low response rate (56%), so it seems this is very biased.

The method for qualitative analysis of the open-ended question is not described and referenced in enough detail to evaluate.

3. Are the data sound?
I think the lack of a high response rate makes the estimates not generalizable; additionally the lack of sampling frame clarity exacerbates that issue.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
Yes

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
Yes
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

This is hard for me to judge because I am not an expert in this field of research. You might ask Mark.Schlesinger@yale.edu for how evidence is used in policymaking literature.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?

Yes