Reviewer’s report

Title: The experience of community health workers training in Iran: a qualitative study

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Reviewer: Christian Darras

Reviewer’s report:

1. It is not truly a question. The article refers to a documentary presentation of “behvarz” training in Iran. The approach is descriptive.

2. The presentation is based on a review of policy documents, unpublished reports, national and provincial operational plans, and training materials/modules. Documentary analysis was supplemented by individual interviews with behvarz.

3. The data are sound but two observations can be made:
   - The interviews concern 91 persons; it is said that study participants were purposively recruited from differing socioeconomic and geographic areas and represented a broad range of age, work experience (from 2 months to 30 years), educational levels, and both male and female behvarz; nevertheless, it should be appropriate to explain how the participants were chosen (was the sample by convenience or random?) – Major compulsory revision.
   - There are few references to national (Iranian) bibliography (actually six, including two from the principal author); a quick search on “Google Scholar” shows an abundant literature, that is not mentioned in the bibliography; I am not at all a expert of the Iranian situation, but I guess that some of the references cited by Google Scholar must be valuable – Major compulsory revision.

4. There is nothing to allow doubting about the good observance of standards for reporting and data deposition.

5. There is a good balance between discussion and conclusions and there are adequately supported by the data.

6. The limitations of the work could be better stated, in particular showing the relation of the study with the general context of CHWs training in Iran and taking into account that the interviewees were 91, from a whole population of 31,000 CHWs – Discretionary revision.

7. See the point 3, about the revision of the available of published papers. It should also be considered that the present article is directly originated from the final report of a research, whose team was composed by SJ, GH and FB (information available on Google Scholar).

8. The title mentions the “Community Health Worker” as the object of the study; however this denomination can be misleading. In the Iranian case, the teaching
for the CHWs is very prolonged (3 years) and is more related with the grade of technical assistant. Furthermore, an important proportion of the interviewees had a university diploma before starting their CHW training. In other parts of the world, this is not the typical profile of CHW (see the examples of Brazil and Thailand mentioned in the article). The abstract conveys what has been found – Discretionary revision.

9. The writing is good. It is just necessary to mention a probable error of typing in Figure 2: it is mentioned “Neutral disasters”, when I supposed it would mean “Natural disasters” – Minor essential revision.

In conclusion, this article constitutes a useful description of a concrete training experience of auxiliary health workforce and can interest people in charge of organizing this kind of educational activity in other countries. Nevertheless, is necessary to be clear that the context is very specific and that the kind of CHW present in Iran is quite unique.

**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.