Reviewer’s report

Title: Assessment of factors influencing retention in the Philippine National Rural Physician Deployment Program

Version: 2 Date: 16 September 2012

Reviewer: Gilles Dussault

Reviewer’s report:

The paper still needs some polishing before publication:

Minor essential revisions:
1-P. 8: Indicate if interviews were conducted by the same interviewer or by more than one. In the latter case, indicate how reliability was ensured.

2- P.9: Indicate how the sample of respondents compares to the population of former DTTBs

3-P. 16: Take out of the Discussion repetitions of results. Separate discussion of results from policy recommendations which should be regrouped at the end from bottom of page 18 (How the DTTB program …”.

4- p. 19: no need for sub-title Conclusions

5- Edits:

P.3: I suggest using the term “shortage” only when referring to available positions remaining unfilled. When talking about unmet needs, I suggest using “deficit”. 

P.4: “The DTTB Program regularly assigns a batch (cohort?) of physicians to …” “Unfortunately, idiosyncrasies in the laws of the national civil service result effectively in a drop of the total compensation for those who opt to be absorbed in poorer municipalities” Explain and rewrite in a more factual style (take out “unfortunately”

P. 6: “The ‘Stayers Questionnaire’ used in a health workforce manual in Uganda (Reference) was identified during the literature review. Permission was kindly given by the author, Emily Bancroft of the University of Washington, to adapted this tool for the purpose of the assessment”

“The respondents were asked to use a 5-point Likert scale to indicate whether they strongly agree, agree, are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements.”

P. 7: “Both tools were validated (tested) …” Validation would be a quite different process.

“Snowball sampling was, therefore, used over a one-month period to produce a
productive sample … .” What is a “productive sample”?

P. 10: “Most of the current DTTBs ….. Less Fewer respondents agreed that …

“Current DTTBs considered their workloads manageable and felt that they had the flexibility to attain a reasonable work-life balance as shown in (Table 3).

P. 11: “Current DTTBs had a comfortable place to sleep with a clean toilet, regular electricity and, to a lesser extent, running water as shown in (Table 4).”

“Many of the former DTTBs agreed that problems with living conditions strongly influenced their decision to remain in their rural post.” Explain

“ … physical distance from one’s children or aged parents.”

“ … and travel allowances as shown in (Table 5).”

P. 12: “ … engaged in private enterprise activities as a response.

“Only these are dealt with in the following:

Differences between sexes (Table 7) revealed that m Male DTTBs felt significantly more respected and were more likely to have good friends at work than females (Table 7).”

P. 14: “ … for career advancement as shown in (Table 12).”

“ Former DTTBs who remained in their areas of assignment revealed (indicated?) that both…”

“ …program phase however, eventually left.”

“…to be within reach of their aging parents or relatives

P.15: “ … coaching for those who choose to stay …”

P. 19 : “ … it is arguable it can be argued that they …”

“…The number of those planning to continue are is low …”

“…who see their futures as specialists …”

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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