Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 17 September 2012

Reviewer: Raoul III Bermejo

Reviewer's report:

A. Major Compulsory Revisions: none

B. Minor Essential Revisions:
1. With regards to the methodology, it is not very clear to me why the investigators chose to:
   - only survey current participants to the DTTB program;
   - and only interview previous participants.
   I would think that the study would be richer if both current and former participants were surveyed and interviewed (a sample). Perhaps the investigators can provide more explicit reasons why they made this choice in the study design.

2. Tables 6 and 12 do not indicate the number of respondents.

3. In presenting results from the qualitative element of the study (interview), readers will appreciate direct quotations to substantiate and support the summaries and generalizations made.

C. Discretionary Revisions:

1. It might be useful for the authors to clearly stat the difficulty in reaching former DTTB participants as a limitation. They were only able to reach 26 of 452 former participants.

2. There are significant parts of the "discussion section" where the authors present/restate results (e.g. paragraph 2 and 3, page 16). I find these unnecessary.

3. The authors need to reconsider the "conclusions section". The conclusions are framed in a rather general way while the research had specific findings that are worth summarizing in the end. The recommendations that are outlined in this section should be linked to conclusions.

4. The authors might want to consider in the discussion the model used by the UP Manila School of Health Sciences (UP-SHS) in Palo, Leyte, Philippines.

   - Authors suggested that the DTTB program look into the motivation of participants but might well expand the rationalization not just on the moment of
fielding recently graduated medical doctors but from the recruitment to medical training.

- The experience of UP Manila School of Health Sciences is presented as a case study in: Transforming Medical Education for the 21st Century - megatrends, priorities and change. Author: George R Lueddeke. April 2012.
- The UP-SHS model “intervenes” early in the recruitment and training of HRH. Strengths include recruitment from targeted communities, constant contact with communities during the training and a social contract with partner LGUs.

**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.