Reviewer’s report

Title: Evidence for integrating eye health into primary health care in Africa: A health systems strengthening approach

Version: 2 Date: 31 October 2012

Reviewer: Karl Blanchet

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

thank you very much for your submission. The issue of integration in eye care is of great interest for policy makers and practitioners. Providing evidence on the impact of integration could constitute a great instrument for policy makers to make informed decisions. However, such information should be clearly described and analysed. One key aspect would be to measure the strength of evidence and the quality of the studies on integration. Your paper is too descriptive and does not critically analyse available evidence.

Major compulsory revisions:

Background

The concept of integration is not clearly defined in your paper. You oppose vertical programmes to government supported programmes. I would suggest you review literature and unpack the concept of integration, which is more complex than a single vision. I would suggest a couple of papers:


Methods

In relation with the limitations of a scoping review and the purpose of your paper to inform policy makers and practitioners, choosing a scoping review may not be appropriate. What is not clear is how you measure the strength of evidence. You rightly explain that this is not the objective of scoping reviews. However, in your results, you use expressions such as "little evidence" or "insufficient evidence". It would have been important to explain in your method section how the quality of evidence has been measured, which represents a crucial indicator for policy makers. They need to know with confidence which evidence is supported by robust research, which is not described in your paper.

The authors should also justify the choice of their method. How do you justify
choosing a scoping review? Why not another type of method?

Results:
Your result is very descriptive and is a list of evidence collected through your review. There is no detail on:
- the strength of the evidence
- the quality of studies
- the types of studies
- the focus of the studies (eye care or other areas)

Your results also present without distinction evidence from eye health and from the general health system.

Discussion
The limitations of the methodology have been well described but should have used by the authors to choose a more appropriate methodology.

In the discussion section, your reader would expect to read more about the implications of your study. It could have been interesting to demonstrate whether evidence available in eye health is comparable to other health sectors.

Minor essential revisions
The references related to quotes should mention the page number.

You mention HSS perspective. The paper could gain clarity if this concept was explained.

The concept of complexity should also be defined.

I hope these comments will be helpful.

Best regards

**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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