Reviewer's report

Title: Out-of-Pocket Expenditure for Primary Health Care in Tajikistan: a time-trend analysis.

Version: 1 Date: 17 October 2012

Reviewer: Bernd Rechel

Reviewer's report:

This is an important contribution on the level of out-of-pocket payments for health services in Tajikistan, which is also of relevance to other countries in Central Asia and the former Soviet Union. I have only some suggestions for discretionary revisions:

1. Expenditure data in para 2, p. 4: these could be updated for 2010 – please specify whether you are using WHO estimates or not (I would recommend using the estimates).
2. “Khodjamourov and Bernel” (p. 5): please correct to “Khodjamurodov and Rechel”
3. “additional, symptomatic treatment such as vitamin injections or intravenous rehydration” (p. 5) – is it worth adding that these treatments apparently do not make any clinical sense?
4. “OPE are frequently referred as informal payments” (para 2, p. 6) – I wonder whether this is true, as out-of-pocket payments also include formal payments
5. Division into “economic groups” (p. 10) – please explain why these were not done into 5 groups of 20% each, as seems to be more common.
6. Results, p. 11, line 2: the number of respondents in the 2005 survey is given as 889, but as 888 in Table 2.
7. Conclusions, last three lines: incentives for family doctors and a strengthened drug control and supply system come a little bit out of the blue – can you expand on these two issues in the discussion section?
8. Macroeconomic indicators (Table 1): I suggest adding Real Gross Domestic Product, PPP$ per capita, so that it becomes easier to see what the combined impact of inflation, economic growth and population growth has been – you could then also mention in the text that, in the context of an overall increase until 2010, there was a drop between 2005 and 2006.
9. The manuscript also needs another careful round of editing, as there a couple of small mistakes (e.g. “undergoing” in line 2 of the abstract should be “undertaking”; “were” in line 1, para 2, on p. 7 should be “where”).

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
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