Reviewer's report

Title: How are Population-based Funding Formulae for healthcare composed? A comparative analysis of seven models

Version: 1 Date: 29 April 2013

Reviewer: Mathew Mercuri

Reviewer's report:

The reviewed article presents a good review and comparison of health funding/resource allocation formulas from seven high-income healthcare systems. I believe this article is well written and offers a good resource for healthcare policy researchers interested in how healthcare is funded. The objectives are well defined and explored. The authors also offer some good suggestions for how to advance the literature in this topic.

Minor Revisions:

One concern I have is that, for the most part, the funding formulas do not explicitly address need. Rather, demographic variables are used as a proxy of need. While the authors do a good job addressing this issue later in the manuscript (i.e. the section regarding “unmet need” and when discussing future directions), some parts of the manuscript seem to imply that age and sex are reasonable indicators of need. I do not think this a major issue, as it is not the focus of this paper to critique the funding formulae, but I think it may be unwise to state, for example, “Rather than measuring health needs directly, demographic characteristics can be used as proxy measure.” – this statement is debatable (e.g. see Mercuri, Birch, and Gafni; Using small-area variations to inform healthcare service planning: what do we ‘need’ to know?, Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice, 2013 [in press]).

Otherwise, I think the manuscript is good in its current form. I thank the journal and the authors for the opportunity to review this manuscript.

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.