Reviewer’s report

Title: A case study of outsourced primary healthcare services in Sindh, Pakistan: Is this a real reform?

Version: 2 Date: 31 December 2013

Reviewer: Benjamin Loevinsohn

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Discretionary Revisions:
1) It may be worthwhile to point out the nature of the data is an "after only, cross-sectional comparison" and explain why the health facilities were likely comparable at baseline or the PPHI facilities could have been worse.

2) It would be worthwhile pointing out that DFID sponsored an independent assessment of PPHI. I’ve attached the report because it is germain.

3) Strictly speaking PPHI is not "contracting out" health services but rather "contracting in" management. Most of the health workers are still civil servants paid by the government. Contracting out makes it sound like government is privatizing the financing of health care, but this is clearly not the case in PPHI where Government continues to finance the cost of services.

4) It might be important to point out that PPHI cost the government the exact same amount as district managed BHUs. The point is that it’s not increased resources that explain the difference.

5) It might be helpful to indicate just how extensive PPHI is in Pakistan. It is not a small pilot. This would give weight to the recommendation about expansion.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.