Reviewer's report

Title: Technical efficiency of peripheral health units in Pujehun district of Sierra Leone: a DEA application

Version: 2 Date: 3 November 2005
Reviewer: Ken Stein

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General

As you say in your covering letter Antonio Giuffrida remains unconvinced that the paper warrants publication. I disagree with the general basis for this on the grounds that there have, apparently, been no previous applications of this technique in sub-Saharan Africa. Although DEA is itself well known I believe the application in this particular geographical setting is useful. That said, the authors could do more to respond to the referees’ outstanding comments. In their response to date they appear to have made no change in relation to the specification of the model, particularly the lack of input variables. They justify this in their response but I believe the manuscript should include their argument. The authors do not appear to have responded to Antonio Giuffrida’s second remaining comment i.e. that the analysis is likely to be affected by the nature of the input variables. The authors should include some reflection on this in their discussion of the strengths and limitations of their study. I believe both these issues can be dealt with swiftly.

Turning to the outstanding comment from Robert Rosenman - I agree that there should be some further discussion of how health education covers the promotion of center uses and output. Again, this should not require much time or space within the manuscript.

Since the originality of the manuscript lies in its application within sub-Saharan Africa it would be helpful if, in the discussion, the authors consider in slightly more detail what the implications for further applications of this technique in this important geographical setting might be.

In summary, I believe the paper has sufficient merit to warrant publication with further minor adjustments.