Reviewer’s report

Title: A systematic evaluation of payback of publicly funded health and health services research in Hong Kong

Version: 1 Date: 12 April 2007

Reviewer: Stephen Duckett

Reviewer’s report:

General

This paper evaluates the health and health services grants program in Hong Kong using a framework developed in the United Kingdom for health research evaluation. It makes a useful contribution to the developing picture of systematic evaluation of health research granting programs. The methods are appropriate and well described and sufficient details are provided to replicate the work. The title, abstract, discussion and conclusions are appropriate and relevant.

Overall the paper is a good one, is well written and makes a useful contribution to this field. The main weakness to the paper is the lack of clarity referred to below.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

The summary statement for the section on impacts reads as follows “Table three shows the participation in policy/advisor, committees and liaison with potential users were predictive of health service benefit….”. This sentence should be revised to make clear whether the participation is post research (which seems to be what is reflected in the design of the questionnaire) and the nature of the liaison with potential users (which I suspect is pre research again reflected in the questionnaire – although it could be that the measure includes liaison during the research process). The sentence should also be amended to include the word reported before health service benefit.

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

The main area where the paper needs strengthening is the section titled “factors associated with the impact of research outcomes on health policy and provider behaviour”. This section could be lengthened to clarify impacts of research.

For example, it would be of interest to a reader to know whether the reported benefit was at the local, national or international level.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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