Author's response to reviews

Title: Investigating health system performance: An application of data envelopment analysis to Zambian hospitals

Authors: Felix Masiye (fmasiye@yahoo.com)

Version: 5 Date: 10 April 2007

Author's response to reviews: see over
Responses to Reviewers’ comments

I would like to appreciate the comments from all my four reviewers. This version is much improved. My response to their second-round of comments are given below.

April 2007

1. Reviewer 1:

I have added the references to the Onfront program in the Methods section in line with the observation.

2. Reviewer 2: one major and a few minor issues raised

I have agreed with the reviewer on his point about running parametric tests although this is still a debatable issue in the literature. Simar and Wilson are leading the theoretical and empirical work in this field and the suggestion from the reviewer was very well appreciated. Two simple non-parametric tests were performed to take account of two important statistical aspects of the analysis namely inference and uncertainty around the estimates. A simple bootstrap test was conducted using estimated efficiency scores to create confidence intervals around the mean. This was done in STATA 9.2

Further, Mann-Whitney tests were run in place of a tobit regression. The main results remained the same, but the idea of avoiding the problems pointed by Simar and Wilson were nonetheless key.

Finally, I have attended to all the grammatical and typographical errors in the text to the best of my ability.

3. Reviewers 3: Three discretionary comments were raised.

I have now used only third, second, first level as opposed to tertiary, primary throughout the text.

My reason for mentioning teaching hospital is that many studies have pointed out that teaching is a major activity of hospitals, which makes academic hospitals different from other hospitals.

With regard to the final observation, I was trying to emphasise that while in many developed countries, data is available from a central point, in the case of Zambia the data had to be collected from individual facilities. This is a limitation on the sample size. I have accordingly rephrased this point in the text to make it clearer.

4. Reviewer 4:

No comments raised.