Reviewer's report

Title: Maintaining Quality of Health Services After Abolition Of User Fees: A Uganda Case Study

Version: 2 Date: 18 October 2007

Reviewer: Steffen Flessa

Reviewer's report:

General
This is a very interesting and important topic! We urgently need more research in this field. Many countries are currently in a process to abolish user-fees. Nobody knows the long-term impact of this policy-change. Therefore, the authors should definitely make the following changes and re-submit the paper.

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

1. The differences between public, private for profit and private non-for-profit are not clearly addressed. In particular, Uganda has a strong church-related health care. Church hospitals had always user-fees. What impact does this change have on them? Do people still go there? Do they suffer financially? What impact does this have on quality?

2. Your titles talks about health care? You should distinguish more clearly between different levels of health care.

3. Uganda is famous for community based insurances. What impact does the abolishment of fees have on CBI?

4. The first paragraph of "methods" section does not belong there. It is more introductory than methods.

5. The quantitative variables are not clear. In particular, health worker variables and client behavior should be explained in more details.


7. There are other forms to make health care without user-fees, i.e. output base aid where the money comes with the client, not as a lump sum from the government. You should at least mention them.

8. You do not mention indirect costs. Most likely, direct user fees are only a minor part of the costs.

9. What about side-payments ("under the counter")?

10. You should also mention that quality management is an aspect of general management. What we really need is professional management and are
professionally trained managers.

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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)
I am not a native English speaker. It might be worthwhile to have another person check the language.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**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'