Reviewer's report

Title: Improving Motivation and Retention of Health Professionals in Developing Countries: A Systematic Review

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Reviewer: Adamson Muula

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Manuscript title: Improving motivation and retention of health professionals in developing countries: a systematic review
Authors: Willis et al

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to review this manuscript. Overall, I found that the manuscript was well written. I have relatively minor comment though and there are as below:

1. In the methods section (both abstract and main text), the authors report that reviews were also included. I would like to have the authors clarify what measures they took in order not to count the same finding twice ie. The findings in the initial paper and the findings repeated in the review.

2. The premise of the paper is grounded in the fact that sub-Saharan Africa has suffered from “health worker” migration. Should we use the term “health professional” to distinguish them from other health facility workers that are also called health workers?

3. In the Result section, second paragraph, the authors list the countries from which the studies reviewed came from. There is no Malawi in the list but reference Magham and Hanson is about Malawi. Could the authors just verify that the list included in the methods encompasses all studied reviewed.

4. I am somewhat confused by the last but one sentence in the conclusions. The authors suggest that countries are different but at the same time they are suggesting that the same tool be used. While I can agree and not agree with the point, I would just ask for clarification and justification of the recommendation.

5. The references formatting needs to revised to meet journal formatting guidelines.

6. In the Acknowledgement section, the authors have identified various agencies. Had these agencies a role in determining content, decision to publish or any other “editorial” role. If yes, please declare somewhere and if not, let us know as well.

Thank you,

Adamson Muula
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.