Reviewer’s report

Title: Experiences, opportunities and challenges of implementing task shifting in underserved remote settings: a case study of Kongwa district, central Tanzania

Version: 2 Date: 12 July 2012

Reviewer: Inge Petersen

Reviewer’s report:

This manuscript reports on a qualitative study which explored the current situation with respect to task shifting in Tanzania as well as perceptions of stakeholders within the health care system from district through to national on the opportunities, benefits and challenges of task shifting. Given that globally, task shifting is receiving increasing attention as a strategy for increasing access to health care in scarce-resource contexts, this manuscript is both timely and may be useful for other countries considering adopting task shifting as a strategy to increase service coverage within the health care sector.

It is recommended that the manuscript be accepted following revisions to address the following concerns:

Minor essential revisions

1. The manuscript needs to be thoroughly proof read for grammatical errors.
2. The method section should focus on the qualitative interviews. While documentary analysis is referred to, there is no further explication of how this was undertaken or reporting of the results of this analysis.
3. The exact number of personnel interviewed at district level should be specified.
4. No mention is made of the translation and transcription of the data. This needs to be included.
5. On page 14 the authors refer to vertical and horizontal task shifting, with vertical task shifting being categorized into upward acting and downward acting. Did the authors coin these terms themselves? Greater clarity on the definition of these terms needs to be provided.

Discretionary revisions

6. It would be useful to have a bit more detail on the district site in relation to the ratio of health workers to population etc.
7. The authors refer to the importance of supervision on pages 28-31. Literature on the importance of adequate training, supervision and support for the success of task shifting abounds. The authors need to include reference to literature which calls for job descriptions of specialists and other health care personnel tasked with these responsibilities to include diversification of roles to include these functions as well as the need for adequate costing of the time required to
provide training, supervision and support.

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

**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’