Reviewer’s report

Title: A comparative study of Taiwan's short-term medical missions to the South Pacific and Central America

Version: 1 Date: 22 September 2012

Reviewer: Jeremy Snyder

Reviewer’s report:

This paper discusses an important and under-studied issue – short term medical missions. The paper has very serious problems that prevent it from meriting publication in its current form. The paper presents too little background on short term medical missions to properly place the existing study in the existing literature on the topic. Most importantly, the paper offers a general overview of Taiwanese missions, but provides too little information on how this information was gathered and does not support the very broad conclusions made in the discussion section.

Major Concerns:

The aim of the paper is stated in very general terms and the aims expressed in the abstract and main text do not match. In the abstract, the aim of the paper is stated as: “Our primary objective is to describe and identify useful strategies for conducting STMMs in the future.” In the main text: “To determine the current scope and content of Taiwan’s STMMs”

The introduction should include much more information on concerns that have been expressed regarding the impacts of STMMs.

Much more detail is needed about how the constraints in table six were measured and what information was asked of participants.

Explain in more detail the justification for the claim, in the second sentence of the discussion, that “Our results demonstrate that STMMs established by the TaiwanICDF are well planned and effective in providing health care and education to host nations.”

Explain the justification for the claim on p. 9 that “Our study demonstrated that the quality of clinical service provided by STMMs from multiple institutions was as effective as that of those from a single institution.”

Explain the justification for the claim on pp. 9-10 that “Secondly, our results indicate that education can help local health workers to improve their knowledge and skills in health care. Activities such as teacher training are as important as individual encounters with patients.”

Minor Concerns:

There are grammatical mistakes throughout the paper that must be corrected.
**Level of interest:** An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.