Reviewer's report

Title: Health workforce performance under decentralisation in Uganda

Version: 1 Date: 27 August 2012

Reviewer: Marthie Bezuidenhout

Reviewer's report:

1. Major Compulsory Revisions: None

2. Minor Essential Revisions:

2.1 The title needs to be amended to read as follows "Health workforce performance after the decentralisation of health services in Uganda". This should be followed through in the whole text as the current title does not specify what is decentralised. Also note the 'under' should be replaced with 'after' please.

2.2 Sound editing by an acknowledged editor would enhance the final product. Using words such as 'astounding' and 'enormous' when discussing the data does not seem to be fitting.

2.3 Requires clarification/correction/better phrasing:
- Abstract, under Results: second sentence is unclear
- Abstract, under Conclusion: the last sentence is not clear, to what does 'This can' refer, also note sentence construction

2.4 Results,
- under Characteristics, second paragraph, please check the 73.6% in view of years experience
- Page 11, last paragraph ".... likely to take individual initiatives to ensure availability" is not clear and not evident from preceding discussion of data. Likewise the next sentence is also not clear.
- Page 12, first paragraph, last sentence about the maldistribution of health workers does not correspond with the data as 59.8% are placed in the rural area and 40.2% in the urban health facilities - considering the focus is on decentralisation, the rural area is actually better off in terms of staff.
- Page 12, second paragraph, second last line insert 'at work' to read ...most of their time at work attending to ....
- Page 13, first paragraph, third line, 'performance' cannot be grouped with productivity, as it was not part of this particular question. In the second last sentence it is noted that ....health workers were almost evenly divided on how their productivity is measured - this is not clear from table 4.
- Page 17, second paragraph, second line, remove the 'what ' before their clients. Two lines down, commence the sentence with "The majority of health workers...."

- Page 17, last paragraph, first line, remove 'more' before "inclined to display...

Page 18, first paragraph first line, please amend to read "...are positively related to the dimensions of performance."

2.5 The objective of the study aspired to "...identify areas for improvement." These areas were not specifically identified in the given text

2.6 Recommendations: no clear recommendations are evident apart from a brief mention to 'stakeholders working together' and 'governmental fiscal decentralisation'

2.7 Acknowledgements: amend to read "...the health workers who participated..."

2.8 Tables
- Captions of tables 2-9: Rephrase to read as follows taking into account the four different dimensions being measured: Items concerning the responsiveness/availability/productivity/competence dimension of health workers (N=276)

- Note inconsistent recording of the first decimal point

- Several of the items in the tables require editing, refer to table 4 line 3, table 5 line 2

3. Discretionary Revisions: None

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