Reviewer’s report

Title: A literature review: The Role of Private Sector Involvement in the Production of Nurses in India, Kenya, South Africa and Thailand

Version: 1 Date: 1 November 2012

Reviewer: David Gamage

Reviewer’s report:

A REVIEW REPORT ON
‘A LITERATURE REVIEW: THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN THE PRODUCTION OF NURSES IN INDIA, KENYA, SOUTH AFRICA AND THAILAND’

Minor comments - For the Attention of the authors only -: Pl. refer to sections on ‘Abstract’, ‘Methods’, ‘Findings’, ‘Nursing supply’, ‘Nurses produced in the private sector’, ‘Demand for nurses’, ‘Policy Environment’, ‘Limitations of the study’, ‘Conclusion’, ‘Authors’ contributions’, and ‘Acknowledgements’, where typographical, grammatical and stylistic suggestions are marked in red when you open the manuscript on the computer screen by changing what are marked in red into black and deleting the word underlined under ‘Conclusion’.

Figure 1: Box on ‘Demand for Nurses’ the last two items should also be in plural changing to ‘factors’.

Figure 2: In the second box on the left ‘detailed’ should be ‘details’. In the first box on the right ‘potential’ should be ‘potentially’.

Tables 1 & 2: I didn’t have access to these two as these were not included in the manuscript uploaded to the web.

1. Does the manuscript address an important timely issue?

The issue addressed in the paper is an important one and timely when one considers the current problems confronting the health systems around the globe and the interest shown by the WHO in setting Millennium Goals to be achieved. The main focus of the paper has been the scarcity of nurses and the contributions by the private sector in the production of nurses. The four countries selected (South Africa, India, Kenya and Thailand) for the research project seems to be appropriate even though reason for such a selection is not very clear. However, it has been pointed out that there is a huge shortage of nurses as well as huge differences in the distributions of nurses within the four countries while the private sectors are making significant contributions within their capacities. Perhaps, two Tables may make it clearer. I didn’t have access to these as these were not attached to the manuscript uploaded to the web.

In terms of methodology authors have raised the appropriate research questions relating to nursing supply, demand for nurses and the policy environments to guide the project. Literature reviews have been limited to electronic searchers of
articles published in English. When one considers the scope of the project such a limitations seems to be appropriate. A large number (i.e. 657,448) of articles potentially relevant have been identified in PubMed, BioMed, Google Scholar and Science Direct and after several stages of eliminations 19 have been selected as the most relevant out of a detailed review of 206 articles. In addition 56 potentially relevant articles have been identified from HRH related networks and organizations leading to the final selection of 46 articles as the most relevant from both approaches and these have been read in full to collect the data. It seems a time consuming tedious process of research.

2. Is it well reasoned?
The research data has been well reasoned in an argumentally acceptable manner to the reader without missing to point out the limitations, gaps and deficiencies of the data relating to each system along with comparisons of the data where feasible.

3. Is it relatively balanced, or does it make plain where the authors’ opinions might not represent the field as a whole?
The paper is relatively balanced with the views of the authors expressed in a forthright manner as almost all authors are well experienced in the field of study. They have not hesitated to point out what is missing along with the limitations where applicable.

4. Is the standard of writing acceptable?
The standard of writing is acceptable for the publication of the manuscript subject to the correction of the minor typographical, grammatical and stylistic issues marked with possible corrections in the relevant sections of the paper in the section for the attention of the authors.

5. Recommendation
Accept the paper subject to the correction of minor issues marked in the relevant sections of the manuscript.

6. Level of Interest
This is an article of importance within the field of nursing in particular, and healthcare in general which has become a very important area in view of the numerous issues and problems confronted by the health systems in most countries. The findings are important to those who have closely related research interests for further research as the gaps have been highlighted by the authors.

7. Quality of written English
The quality of English is appropriate for publication subject to the minor corrections as recommended.

8. Statistical review
Very limited relevance of statistics as far I had opportunity to examine but what is involved was checked.
Declaration on competing interests

• Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
  No

• Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?
  No

• Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?
  No

• Do you have any other financial competing interests?
  No

• Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?
  No

I declare that I have no competing interests relating to the paper.
Yours sincerely,
Sgd.
(Prof. David T. Gamage)