Reviewer's report

Title: Rural health workforce project in five counties in China: research design and baseline description

Version: 5  Date: 25 March 2013

Reviewer: Vivian Lin

Reviewer's report:

Compulsory revisions:

The value of this project is in its longitudinal nature, but this issue is not sufficiently highlighted. I would suggest:

- The title be changed to “Longitudinal study of rural health workforce in five counties in China…” This would stress both that it is a study, not just a project, and it is longitudinal

- Indicate in the methods section how long the study will be going for, and how many waves are expected

The final part of the conclusion section should give a little more elaboration about what is included in the study on a longitudinal basis such that it will be beneficial for the development of health reform in China.

The very last sentence about such a study being beneficial for development of rural health workforce in other LMICs should either be expanded upon or deleted. The point is not necessary, but if the authors want to introduce the point, then they need to elaborate on how and why it would be beneficial.

There are still many errors with the English language, and a good polish by a native speaker/writer remains needed. For example:

- The sentence “The success of barefoot doctors was primarily attributed to political priority…..” does not make sense. The success of barefoot doctors has something to do with what contributed to health outcomes. The success of a program might be related to political priority.

- What does ‘indispensable impact’ on China's health care system mean?

- ‘Moderate economics’ is poor expression for ‘moderate level of economic development’

- What does ‘Too100 Counties of China’ mean”? I presume that’s a typographical error and it should be ‘Top’ but the reader does not understand what Top 100 counties mean.

- “In hence” does not make sense

- ‘More pertinence is needed….” does not make sense

These are just some examples of language that need to be fixed.
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: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests