Reviewer’s report

Title: Forecasting nursing professions: Impacts of occupational mobility and employment structure in Germany

Version: 2 Date: 25 August 2012

Reviewer: Jean M Moore

Reviewer’s report:

This is important research and a better understanding of variation in the use of nursing personnel can support effective health workforce planning.

Major Comulsory Revisions

Given the international readership of this journal, there are a number areas in the paper that require additional clarification:

1) A fuller description of the 'auxilliary nurses' included in this analysis is needed. While it appears that it may include nursing assistants and other paraprofessionals, it is not clearly stated.

2) While there are clear differences in the use of nursing personnel in these regions, more context is needed. For example, are there differences in the rates of physicians per 100,000 that could explain the variation in the use of nursing personnel? Are there differences in the number of more highly qualified nurses in the two regions that could explain the variation? Are there differences in geography or health status of the population between the two regions that could explain the variation? Perhaps it would be useful to include a discussion section to the manuscript to address these issues, since such differences could affect use of nursing personnel between regions.

3) Importantly, it is critical to understand the impacts of differences in use of nursing personnel on patient outcomes. If no data are available for such an assessment, it would be important to acknowledge the need for such an analysis in future studies.

Minor Essential Revisions

1) Need for better translation of this manuscript to English.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.