Reviewer's report

Title: Applying the Workload Indicators of Staffing Need (WISN) Method in Namibia: Challenges and Implications for Human Resources for Health Policy

Version: 1 Date: 28 October 2013

Reviewer: Jennifer Nyoni

Reviewer's report:

- Minor Essential Revisions:

1. The last but one paragraph on page 6 for purposes of staffing plans it is imperative to consider the workload in a particular health facility. Following the observation that due to lack of staff, many health cadres performed tasks that were supposed to be carried out by others, it is only right not to include these additional activities. However for to achieve proper staffing these have to be considered. Please explain the approach taken here.

2. On page 7 please explain adjustments made and provide an example.

3. On page 9 When national HIS did not provide all of the facility level data, it is mentioned that task force directly collected the missing data. Please provide further elaboration. Was a sample chosen for this activity?

4. Concerning table 1:
   a. A fixed percentage of Workload data has been considered for certain activities. There is no explanation in the text for this approach. Please provide supportive evidence for the approach taken
   b. It is questionable if total number of admissions is the correct indicator of the daily rounds, routine nursing care, as these activities are not done per admission rather as daily activities. The considered indicators would result in underestimation of the actual workload. Was this chosen due to lack of a better option. Please explain.
   c. Time for ‘Monitor and manage forceps delivery and vacuum delivery’ does not seem to be included in the study, though they are counted in ‘Immediate postnatal care’. Any particular reason?

5. On pages 8 and 9 contradictory statements: the linking program is stated as useful and issues trouble shoted earlier in the text. Later in the text the program stated as not having served the purpose. You may wish to clarify

6. On page 9 concerning Software challenges: I believe the challenge of data entry is not one particular to the tool used or its design. The aspect of manual data entry at some stage is necessary for all analysis involving stand-alone tools be it via upload templates or direct entry to the tool itself. It would not be fair therefore to the WISN tool as it gives an impression of a shortcoming of the tool to serve its intended purpose whereas it is not the case.
7. On page 16-the term 'generalist' creates some confusion as earlier in the passage, the concept was of creating a cadre between doctors and nurses. Was this meant to be 'additional training for nurse'

8. Could you provide clear reference to WHO/EURO forth coming article. Maybe an URL? s’ or the term refers specifically to the MD category

- Discretionary Revisions

1. On page 10 it is not comprehensive to conclude/state staffing gaps are due to lack of national production. This may need to be explored further to consider the other factors/reasons- could it be due to lack of posts, recruitment processes or financial constraints etc.

2. It may be useful to include tables to show within region inequities mentioned in the document if possible

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'