Reviewer’s report

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

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Reviewer: Gulin Gedik

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well written article, reflecting a national application of WISN leading to review of staffing norms. The paper provides an overview on one of the latest applications of the WISN approach. Th methodology is well applied and well presented.

1. In the section related to challenges faced, reference is made to two challenges as software challenges and data challenges, with a special emphasis given to software challenges. I believe data challenge is important and critical. However, it should be noted that software is to support the application of the WISN approach and it is an aid to facilitate calculations. It has been great that the team identified some shortcomings of the software which led to improvements, and this can be referred in the paper briefly, not necessarily in such a lengthy way as it is. It would be useful to mention more methodology related challenges such as defining activities and activity standards if there was any.

2. There are some parts in the paper which are quite individualized unnecessarily, confusing the focus of the paper whether it is about WISN and its application in Namibia or an agency supporting the process or the individuals involved i.e. intern, project coordinator.

3. The section on WISN findings starts with the sentence of ‘A full discussion of the Namibian WISN findings is beyond the scope of this paper….’. If the focus of the paper is not ‘the application and findings of WISN in Namibia’, the focus should be made clear. At this point it is confusing what the focus of the paper is.

4. The starting point of the study is to review and redefine the staffing norms. However, it is not clear in the end of the paper whether the staffing norms were redefined. There are some indications of how the findings may lead to new definitions, but the outcome may need to be more explicitly mentioned.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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'