Reviewer's report

Title: Training for Health Services and Systems Research in Sub-Saharan Africa - A Case Study at Four East and Southern African Universities

Version: 1 Date: 4 October 2013

Reviewer: JANETE CASTRO

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Report

The title of the article aptly represents its theme and the issues discussed. The central question is well presented and relevant to both healthcare services and universities. The method is appropriate and has been well used, providing sufficient support for the results found. The methodology is clear and enables the reader to understand how the study was performed. The authors have made it clear that the research was approved by the ethics committees of the institutions under study. The discussions and conclusions are clear; however, there are some items that can be improved - (Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached):

1. The text requires a grammar review before being published. For example, there are several instances of pronouns used (this, these) that do not agree with the corresponding verb (need instead of needs on page 11, setting instead of settings on page 12). The authors have also used some phrases that do not sound natural in English (occupies a tenuous home on page 11 – a tenuous position would be a better choice here; not able to get away from job on page 12 – unable to leave work is a more natural sounding option). It is also not advisable to use contractions in scientific articles (aren’t on Page 4) suggest or repeat the same word continuously throughout the article (the word “further” is used repeatedly throughout the article, but is incorrect in this instance; the correct usage would be furthermore; however, it would be advisable to replace this in some instances with other options such as moreover or in addition).

2. The references in the body of the text need to be reviewed. There are instances of author’s names cited without the year. For example, Bennet et al does not cite the year of reference.

3. The authors have used two standards for the references; I suggest revising the entire text and unifying the referencing format according to the journal standards.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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’ below