Reviewer's report

Title: Job satisfaction and retention of healthcare providers: a cross sectional study in Afghanistan and Malawi

Version: 1  Date: 27 June 2013

Reviewer: Estelle Quain

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- Major Compulsory Revisions

1. My major concern about this article is that it seems that the conclusions are obvious—“Health worker satisfaction and intention to stay on the job are highly dependent on local context.”-- and that the data collection, although it seems to have been done very carefully, does not add to what might have been concluded without the data.

2. Also, I am not sure what the value is of a comparative analysis if the context of the 2 countries is so different. To some extent, it seems that this study is “comparing apples and oranges,” and it makes for very frustrating reading.

3. If the importance of different determinants of job satisfaction and intention to stay in different contexts vary so greatly, the article isn’t clear on the value of comparing them.

4. It seems obvious that “…strategies for health workforce strengthening must be tailored to address human resource crises in their own countries” (page 6).

5. The Discussion section is difficult to follow as the nuances between the differences in data are too subtle to be explained in words alone---maybe integrate a table in the text----but it should not be just raw statistical data.

6. The article does not give enough attention or specificity to the cultural or anthropological differences in these 2 countries which may also be contributing to the data findings. It feels like we are reading “only half the story.”

7. I find the following confusing: “…particularly on the relative importance of different determinants of job satisfaction and intention to stay in different contexts as well as on the effectiveness of interventions designed to improve health worker performance and retention” (pp. 16-7). If the bottom line is that these vary by context, then what can we say about these interventions generally, except that they vary by context?

8. The writing is acceptable.


Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.