Reviewer's report

**Title:** The effects of health worker motivation and job satisfaction on turnover intention in Ghana: a cross-sectional study

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**Reviewer:** Delanyo Dovlo

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HRH J feedback  
The effects of health worker motivation and job satisfaction on turnover intention in Ghana: a cross-sectional study Marc Bonenberger1,2§, Moses Aikins3, Patricia Akweongo3, Kaspar Wyss1,2

• Excellent article on the difficult subject of satisfaction, motivation and retention intentions. It is an area strongly influenced by context, personal situation connotations and so very difficult to assess solely through structured questionnaires and statistical means and be able to reach practical conclusions
• The methodology was excellent with detailed statistical approaches. Shall need the review of a statistician as I am not a statistician.
• However, for such an area, I feel it is also essential that qualitative approaches be used to unearth underlying issues and interpretations. I think this has been partly acknowledged in the limitations section. It however leaves us perhaps with as many policy questions as we started.

Some detailed comments on content
• Health and nurse aides I think are usually locally recruited and therefore have less prospect of wanting to work elsewhere? Was this considered?
• It would have been useful to have an analysis of the qualifications and training of the DDHS and DHMT members to get a sense of whether their capacity was the issue in creating the retention environment.
• It seems to me from the data, that being rural districts mostly, many health workers there were newly qualified and it may be likely that youthful and recent employees have more urge to mobility?
• Again it will be useful to have some sense of economic strength of the districts – Rural, semi urban does not seem to describe enough what the context is. Absence of basic factor (safe water, electricity, schools for children, entertainment, distance from a city) may well have strong influences on willingness to be retained (as is origin of the health workers – whether urban or rural origins)
• In some cases particularly with older respondents, perhaps the presence of a spouse or extra-mural economic activity based within the district may influence
the decision to remain

- It is unclear what the scope of DDHS/DHMT managerial authority is to deal with the real issues of low pay, career structure, and how this may have influenced the retention opinions of staff. What authority do DHMTs have to respond to job satisfaction and retention? This is not much discussed.

- Small point on page 7: I believe CHPS was conceived in the late 1990s but implemented as policy in the 2000s?

- On Page 12 – there were useful data on the qualifications etc., some comparisons with the rest of the country will perhaps be useful. Also at the bottom – 69% with “intention to leave” – is there description of where they want to leave to? E.g., to an Urban location, home district, another rural location? Go for further qualification?

- The limitations were well articulated and accurate and it is unsure why the study design did not tackle some of them.

- Conclusions: The conclusions seem to me to be the weakest part of the paper as I feel it could have drawn much more from the analyses and findings.
  - The link of younger, more recent appointees to intention to leave for example
  - As there wasn’t much detailed analysis of HRM practices in the study beyond opinions of respondents, it is difficult to accept the second sentence in the conclusions
  - The conclusion assumes certain functions of district health managers but the study did not tell us whether they had been trained/skilled in these areas enough to “act as advisors in career planning or recommend promotions of promising health workers….” Etc., an in-service training conclusion that seemed to me to have no basis generated from the findings/analysis
  - I would have expected some advice in the conclusion on (i) the decision space in these districts; (ii) the capacity needed by district health managers and how to perhaps acquire these; (iii) the age profiles and experience of HWs and how this influences retention of motivation to leave etc.,

- It is a well referenced paper.

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.