Reviewer’s report

Title: Mapping human resources for eye health in sub-Saharan Africa: current progress towards VISION 2020

Version: 1  Date: 31 March 2014

Reviewer: Matthew Pearce

Reviewer’s report:

Minor essential revisions
1. Background paragraph 2, sentence one missing period.
2. Table 2 – total refractionists – are these numbers correct? A large rounding error? They add to 103%.

Discretionary revisions:
3. Background first and second sentence seem awkwardly worded.
4. While this is a descriptive study, the authors draw the reader’s attention to a number of areas that might explain the reason for HReH shortages in the region (Background - end of paragraph 2). They state that filling these knowledge gaps would assist with the development of appropriate HReH strategies. It would be beneficial for the author’s to clearly specify best next steps to meet these knowledge gaps generally and address their recognized HReH shortages specifically. That is, it would be beneficial to draw the reader’s attention back to the need to determine why HReH shortages exist rather than just knowing that they do.
5. Consider moving explanation of “country mean” and “country median” up to “available information on HReh in Sub-Saharan Africa”
6. In the first paragraph of the Multi-country comparisons section the authors describe the categorization and mapping of surgeon and OCOs/nurse practitioner-population ratios. This does not seem to be referenced again outside of its use in the creation of figure 4. It could be condensed and moved to form a legend for figure 4.
7. In the “HReH distribution by country” section, “Surgeons” subsection it might be beneficial to mention what percentage of the sample population Nigeria, Sudan and Ethiopia form.
8. In the “Refractionists” subsection a brief explanation of why Nigeria is thought to be the largest employer of optometrists would be beneficial. This is especially important as the paper generalizes to the region and states that optometric/refractionist human resources are most scarce while noting that the country with the most optometrists employed is not included in the count.

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.