Reviewer's report

Title: Human Resources for Eye Health in Sub-Saharan Africa: Trends and Implications for Achieving VISION 2020 by Year 2020

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Reviewer: andreas mueller

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Background
Note: The authors refer to the VISION2020 action plan 2006-2011, which states specific targets for human resources for eye health per cadre. The current global action plan however does not identify HReH targets but requests monitoring of HReH only. Most countries have national action plans and will have national HReH targets based on needs.

How were the 21 Sub-Saharan countries identified? Throughout the paper, the authors refer to findings as 'regional'. This may be questioned considering that less than 50% of countries in the region were included in the research and the lack of data received e.g. on refractive error.

Method
How were data collected for cataract surgery numbers per surgeon?
Please define "surgical target performance"?
I suggest the authors define the VISION2020 target ratios in this section

Results
It would be useful to have a table with country specific numbers for HReH and surgical efficiency. Efficiency is a crucial factor in this context and country specific data would be useful for planning purposes.

Were private refractionists / optometrists included? I suggest the authors further discuss the role of the private sector to deliver these services in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Were NGO activities included in the data analysis? NGOs will provide a large proportion of surgeries in the region and this will need to be reflected when CSR targets are discussed Can the authors please reference the "VISION2020 CSR target" of 2000 surgeries per million population. Where is this stated? Is this a regional target? Most countries will, appropriately, have national CSR targets. The current global action plan does not set CSR targets but refers to national targets only.

Discussion
For a meaningful discussion on HReH, the authors may want to further address the issue of distribution of existing human resources. Although the authors do
relate HReH with surgical output, the issue of rural vs urban distribution will play an important role in this discussion. The authors briefly mention the issue of trained surgeons not actually carrying out cataract surgery. It is suggested to further discuss this important issue here.

**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