Reviewer's report

Title: Why some physicians in Portuguese-speaking African countries work exclusively for the private sector? Findings from a mixed-methods study

Version: 1 Date: 28 March 2014

Reviewer: Terence Cheng

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Presentation issues:

1. It is written that the paper focuses on physicians working exclusively for the private sector although it is not clear to me why this should be the case. The dataset that the authors used also contains information about public-only and dual practising doctors. In fact the authors present descriptive statistics from all three groups in some tables (e.g. Tables 1 and S1), and of two groups in others (e.g. Table 2). The qualitative analysis also discusses motivations for private work for both private-only and dual practising doctors. I feel that the scope of the paper should be rewritten to include all three doctors types, which is a more accurate description of the current paper. Doing so broadens the paper's scope, and makes the coverage more complete.

2. The paper breaks up the description of physicians' personal and work characteristics into three separate tables; namely Tables 1, and 2 and S1. I would prefer a large table in the main text containing these variables, the respective means, standard deviations as well as columns describing statistical significance testing the differences in means. Differences in medians, where it is deem more appropriate, can be discuss in the text. Having one single table would make it easier for the reader to get a complete picture of the sample and its characteristics.

3. Table S2 can be presented as a table of means. For instance discrete scores of 1 - 4 can be assigned to responses "Not Important" to "Very Important" which makes it easier to compare how physicians responses differ across doctor types.

4. I would prefer that the paper presents the quantitative results, which gives the readers a better sense of the sample, before delving into the qualitative results (Sections 3.2 and 3.4). At the moment the presentation is rather disorganised.

Specific comments:
Section 3.2, Line 1: Are the private practising doctors all paid fee-for-service? If not, state this is so.

Section 3.3, Para 2: I am assuming that "medical acts" refer to the number of services. Does the data differentiate between public or private services (the actual survey is not included in the paper so I cannot tell, although it is stated as so). Can the authors include and discuss these in the table of results as this may shed light on the productivity of physicians?

Section 3.4, Para 1, L3. Missing word after "exclusively in the private ____" 

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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