Reviewer’s report

Title: The public sector nursing workforce in Kenya - a county level analysis

Version: 2 Date: 17 September 2013

Reviewer: Matthew McHugh

Reviewer’s report:

• Additional information on the data and how they are collected to get a sense of completeness/representativeness including: Are all staff nurses represented? Is it compulsory? Are any institutions omitted?

• Authors must more clearly identify why the relationships between density and the chosen variables are of interest. For example, age and qualifications seem reasonable but clarify why male:female ratio is important (i.e., why would a reader care about gender disparity in workforce so long as there were enough well-trained nurses available to provide care, regardless of gender distribution).

• If possible, examine distribution of nurses by additional characteristics including educational composition or foreign educated nurses. Educational composition of the workforce, for example, seems more meaningful in terms of concerns regarding maldistribution. The work needs a better sense of not just the density but the characteristics and quality of the workforce distribution.

• Figures 4 & 5 arent particularly informative. At minimum, the labeling should be clearer. The gender figure could represent either male or female but need not be stacked. For the age, it may be more meaningful to focus on one category or collapse to show the distribution of the older nurses if that is the focus.

• A depiction of the distribution of institutions would be useful particularly since the nurses represented in the data are institution specific.

Minor:

• Overall labeling of figures should be improved. For example, on the maps (figure 3&6) – it isn’t clear what the numbers in the countries are labeling.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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