Reviewer's report

Title: Source country perceptions, experiences and recommendations regarding health workforce migration: A case study from the Philippines

Version: 1 Date: 18 August 2014

Reviewer: Sonali Johnson

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

The paper needs more analytical reporting and discussion of findings. Here are some suggestions:

1. It is not clear from the Introduction what this paper adds. Why was this study conducted and what question(s) does it address? This would help to provide more structure and analysis to the narrative that follows.

2. The methods section is unclear. It states that data were collected through FGDs with key informants but in the third paragraph, the paper states that interviews were conducted with ten key informants. So, was there a mixture of FGDs and IDIs? What was the total number of participants? The table indicates 17. Please clarify.

3. Dividing the results section into the two focus groups is too simplistic and did not engage well with the principal themes. For example, in the education focus group, under 'perceptions'- a few issues were addressed but without apparent link- the first para talked about the US as the preferred destination (although the focus of the paper was on migration to Australia), and then at the end of the paragraph jumped to joining family networks. The meaning and relevance of the third paragraph on data collection and management to the overall aims of the paper was not clear.

4. Rather than separating by focus groups, the authors could re-structure using the principal themes identified: health workforce migration preferences, education standards, health care standards and current concerns regarding the oversupply of nurses. The discussion section would then analyse commonalities and divergences between the groups of respondents and situate within available literature on the health workforce, including within the Philippines.

5. In the discussion section, some issues such as 'gender' are introduced for the first time. If gender issues did emerge in the findings, it would be important to raise them in the results section and then contextualize in the discussion.

6. The most interesting aspect of the paper was the finding of 'volunteerism'- this deserved greater space in the reporting to flesh out its dimensions and then more discussion on its consequences in the discussion.
Minor essential revisions

Language editing is required.

Discretionary revisions

There appeared to be some inconsistencies in the article. For example, in the last concluding paragraph, the authors state that the study highlights the dire and negative consequences for education and health sectors. This gives the impression that the attitude was overwhelming negative. However, some findings suggest that the respondents were recommending 'enabling factors' for migration - for example on p.8. a respondent appeared to support additional units of study for potential migrant nurses on transcultural aspects (would be interesting to hear more about this). Another suggested improvement as 'better pronunciation' and implementing orientation programmes to assist nurses with migration to Australia. How can these viewpoints be reconciled? Is there a dual discourse around migration?

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.