Reviewer's report

**Title:** Process evaluation of two Community Health Worker programs in Kenya

**Version:** 1  
**Date:** 7 February 2014

**Reviewer:** Peter C Drobac

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**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. The methodology and analysis are not clearly presented. There is no description of how data are coded, and no quantification of the responses. As such, there is no way of knowing whether the findings were truly representative of those interviewed, or merely a curated selection of anecdotes. This is particularly concerning given the potential for bias in this study. A more thorough understanding of the methodology, coding, and objective presentation of data is necessary to determine the integrity of the reported findings.

2. As the authors note, there are several potential sources of bias. The first author served as the CHW program manager for MVP’s East Africa operations at the time of the evaluation—the fact that not a single CHW in the Bauri group had a single negative thing to say about their supervisors seems highly unusual. The authors also noted that their understanding of the government CHW program was far more limited than that of their own program. Short of an independent evaluation by a qualified third party—which would have been the ideal approach—perhaps the investigators could collaborate with individuals in the public sector who are responsible for the program. This would at least allow for some balance.

3. The authors’ argument that a 6-week CHW training is “optimal for the CHWs knowledge retention and effective delivery of services” is unsubstantiated. Clearly comprehensive training will be more effective than poor, fragmented training, but the length of training is not proven in this manuscript. Moreover, because the education level in the two groups differs dramatically (two-thirds of Bauri CHWs have secondary-plus education, versus only one-third of Ndere CHWs), the training requirements to develop similar competencies likely differs as well. The two groups are not easily comparable.

4. The general tone of the manuscript is somewhat subjective, suggesting that the MVP program is superior to the state-sponsored CHW program—which had significantly less funding and training, a different scope of activities, and less educated CHWs. A more productive viewpoint would be an explanation of lessons learned from this pilot study that could inform policy.

**Minor Essential Revisions**

1. As a general comment, the writing was clear but the manuscript contained
numerous minor spelling and grammatical errors that warrant the expertise of a scientific editor. Some are included below:

2. Page 10: “...for which we naturally benefitted from...” # Benefited
3. Page 21: “Overall, the Ndere CHWs demonstrated focused on describing...” # I think you mean only “focused”.
4. Page 28: “…the MVPs CHW policy did not supports...” # support
5. Page 32: “…faced a number of challenges with respects to...” # respect

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

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