Reviewer's report

Title: A scoping review of training and deployment policies for human resources for health for maternal, newborn, and child health in rural Africa

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Reviewer: Emmanuel Banchani

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions

This article seeks to examine the Human Resources for Health (HRH) policies in rural Africa and how their link to maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH). The article is timely as most studies in Africa seem to focus on the clinical, service delivery, socio-cultural aspects of MNCH with little focus on policies that could impact on these important Millennium Development Goals. The authors should consider the following issues in improving the quality of the paper

1. Background: The authors provided a good background to the study. However, the study needs to be put in its proper context. The authors should provide background information on maternal and child health services in Africa. For example, what are the current maternal and child mortality rates for Africa? How has the crisis HRH in Africa contributed to worsening the situation of MNCH in rural Africa? This should serve as a strong basis as to why the study is important.

2. Methods: The authors adopted a scoping review strategy to identify peer-reviewed, non-peer-reviewed articles as well as policy documents for this study. While the selection criteria were vigorous and well executed, the authors did not indicate how those documents were analyzed. This should be stated clearly. I assume a content analysis was used to identify the various themes for analysis.

3. Results: Since the study only focused on MNCH, the results section on deployment, recruitment, and retention did not address issues of the specific clinical focus stated by the authors in Table 1. Although the authors discussed general HRH, it is not clear whether some of the categories of personnel such as dental surgeons are particularly recruited, deployed and retain for MNCH services in rural Africa.

Minor revision

No comments

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