Reviewer’s report

Title: Six principles to enhance health workforce flexibility

Version: 1 Date: 27 June 2014

Reviewer: James Buchan

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Minor essential revisions

The paper is thoughtful and generally well written but requires some additional content and tidying up:

Tidying up- page numbers required and also a final proof read- some errors/words missing- eg page 3 of text, para with sentence beginning "However, for instance Australia.." requires a rewrite; page 7, heading for 6 has a word missing

Content:

abstract, and text- distribution is one aspect of shortages that is not mentioned abstract, and text- somewhere there is need to mention role of management and supervision as an enabler of flexibility, or barrier

p1 of text- background. Atkinsons model [and later work by Atkinson and Meager] were criticised by contemporaries- probably worth a paragraph; plus there is at least one dimension of flexibility- contract based- eg use of short term contracts, zero hour contracts etc [see eg paper by J Buchan in Health Services Management Research]

p 2 of text: "service partitioning" is likely to be phrase most readers have not come across- needs some more background/ definition

P2 of text- para on service partitioning "...presumably more expensive.."- any evidence/ references for this?

p3 of text third para "Australia and overseas.." needs a rewrite for an international audience

p4 of text point that "condensation of demand" increases costs needs some more explanation

p5 of text- minimizing training times- should also include discussion of clinical placement/ supervised practice requirements

p 6 of text- para with ".the National Health Service.." should add ".in the UK"

P7 of text- point 6 on "Enable practitioners.." requires some expansion- relatively weak currently
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:
'I declare that I have no competing interests'