Reviewer's report

Title: Special feature on health leadership, Article 2: Improving Retention and Performance in Civil Society in Uganda

Version: 2 Date: 27 May 2008

Reviewer: Daniel Shaw

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General comments: this is an efficiently written, to-the-point article that describes the largely successful application of MSH-inspired leadership and management tools to country-context challenges in Uganda.

Following some minor language editing and formatting, I would propose this article for publication.

The rigorous approach to drastically changing the management in the context described was very effective, particularly considering the timeframe. However, I would have been interested to see whether sometimes less extreme actions - particularly rather swift sacking of staff - could have been avoided in the place of more subtle approaches (such as further retraining of such staff or attacking root causes of reasons for their poor performance).

The effect on retention, activity and motivation of staff is remarkable and further confirmed by the apparent increase in performance and delivery/access of care.

This commentary style article should be accessible to a wider range of readers, particularly those looking for more practical responses to leadership, management, staff retention and motivation dilemmas at a local level.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I have no competing interests in the work, article or submitting institution itself.

However, I should declare that at the same time as reviewing this article I am also the journal's managing editor.

This is a commentary-style article and part of a lighter sequence of articles contributed by MSH - planned for a less formalised review procedure and overseen by editorial colleagues.