Reviewer’s report

Title: Joint Special Issue E.21: Training front-line health workers for tuberculosis control in developing countries: lessons from Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan

Version: 1 Date: 30 July 2008

Reviewer: John Hall

Reviewer’s report:

The article states in the introduction that its purpose is: “This article compares the quality, quantity and distribution of tuberculosis physicians, Laboratory staff, community health workers and nurses in Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan”

1. The Introduction is adequate and the current literature on the topic area is covered reasonably.

2. The sub-headings are well used.

Compulsory revisions:

3. The meaning of the sentence: “Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) preferentially fund vertical or combined tuberculosis control and training programs despite their limitations.[7,8]”; is not clear. It needs to be re-written to make its meaning clear.

4. The meaning of: “reverse integration” of tuberculosis services and some general health services into better funded leprosy control programs has been occurring in many projects. [9]”; is also not clear. It needs to be re-written to make its meaning clear.

5. Under the sub-heading “Quantity” the reader does have a good idea of the human resource needs in Nigeria and Kyrgyzstan but it is not clear if all the ratios of health workers relate specifically to TB Health Workers or Health Workers in general. Further, there is no actual data on the various categories of health worker spoken of in the introduction. In order to achieve the stated objectives of the paper some actual data needs to be included.

6. Under the sub-heading “Quality” the first 2 paragraphs of this section deal with current WHO and IUATLD policy and recommendations on TB Health Workers. Following on from this there is then no actual data or information on the quality of training and health worker performance presented by the authors which enables the reader to assess the adequacy or otherwise of the quality of training in either country.

7. Under the sub-heading “Distribution” there is an outline of the policies to address the need for equitable distribution of TB Workers which is adequate.
There is no actual data on how TB Health workers of the various categories spoken of in the introduction are currently distributed in both countries. To achieve the stated objectives of the paper there needs to be more data on the current distribution of TB health workers.

8. In the “Conclusion” the authors introduce new information e.g. terms such as “productivity mix”, information on successful policy responses in Malawi, the role of NGOs. These should be moved to the Introduction or a Discussion section of the paper. The conclusion should be kept to summarize and re state the key points of the paper.

Minor Essential Revisions

9. The source(s) of the data in Table 1 needs to adequately acknowledged.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable