Reviewer's report

Title: Human resources and the quality of the emergency obstetric care in developing countries: a systematic review of the literature

Version: 1 Date: 8 July 2008

Reviewer: Gilles Dussault

Reviewer's report:

This paper addresses an important topic and is of potential interest for the Journal. In its present format, it is not ready for publication and requires important revisions, listed below:

1. Materials and methods:
1.1. Were there any language restriction in the literature search?
1.2. What is "systematic screening"?
1.3. What criteria were used to select some journals?
1.4. ENDNOTE is a program for reference management.
1.5. What is meant by "retained articles were studied …"?
1.6. Explain was is "normative evaluation studies …"

2. Section "Study selection": call it "Eligibility criteria" and rearrange around themes such as type of studies, study topic, type of documents, etc. See Stroup et al. JAMA 283, 2008-12 for guidelines for meta-analysis and systematic reviews. Do not use systematic review in title.

3. Method: describe how selection was done, who were the reviewers, their background, how divergent opinions were handled, …

4. When quoting study results, indicate where it was conducted and the year of reference

5. In reporting study results, separate what was observed from prescriptions

6. Discuss differences of views found in literature

7. P.2: role of HR … not treated: explain what limitations this implies for the review

8. Other revisions:

8.1. Review of the whole paper by an English speaker.
8.2. P.7, 5e l.: emigration, not immigration ; l.13: delete political ; 3.1.2 … ; sentence starting with While … not clear.
8.3. p.8, 3.2.1, "Clinical care …."not clear
8.4. P.9: 4 lines before the end: …vote catching ….what is meant here?
8.5. P. 11, 3.3.1: … It should vary … Indicate reference

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

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.