Reviewer's report

Title: Optimising Human Resources in Health Care: From a Staff-Mix Perspective Towards a Systemic Approach

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Reviewer: Oystein Evjen Olsen

Reviewer's report:

First I would like to express that this is a very interesting and useful overview of the concept of Human Resource staff and skills management dilemma. The authors have contributed to the debate. I have the following comments:

Major compulsory revisions

1. The methodology section is brief, and should be expanded to also include a more in depth description of the other types of literature and their professional context used. For instance, how much of literature pertaining to fields such as organizational psychology, human resource management etc was used? As it is now there is only one sentence referring to other literature consulted in the event of lack of literature in the health care sector.

2. The description of the challenges of staff mix monitoring is well argued, likewise the introduction of skill mix as a HR management concept. There is however not much, if any, suggestion as to how skill mix can be evaluated and monitored at management levels. The obvious advantage of staff mix is the relative ease with which it can be quantitatively monitored. The article needs to discuss this and suggest ways of handling this challenge for managers and policy makers.

Minor Essential Revisions

1. The concept of staff mix and skill mix are used extensively in the Background section without a short explanation or definition. The definition is provided much later in the article. A brief definition of these two concepts very early in the article would make the introduction more readable.

2. Although the article is comprehensive in scope, and as such demands much description, the article could usefully be shortened and perhaps focused. One suggestion would be to particularly scrutinize the latter sections of the article for revision.

Discretionary Revision

1. There are only a few typing errors (missing plural and missing beginning or end of brackets etc) that could use another run-through of spell check.

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