Reviewer's report

Title: Human Resources for Health and decentralization policy in the Brazilian Health

Version: 1 Date: 16 February 2011

Reviewer: James Buchan

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Major Compulsory Revisions

This paper covers interesting ground; however for an English language audience it will require some editing and re writing to improve comprehension. In particular, the following sections/paragraphs require some re-writing:

- page 4, paras beginning "The process of.." and "The health reform..."
- page 5, para beginning "According to Fleury.."
- page 6 para beginning "However Pierantoni.."
- page 7 para beginning "As Dal Poz.."

Secondly, there is a need for some restructuring and change of emphasis:

- the balance of the paper between review and original research is currently biased towards the review; this could be edited down and more space devoted to the original research- in particular, there could be more detail on the shaping of research questions and the research focus (page 7); more detail in reporting of findings on pages 9-13; and more focus in the conclusion. There also needs to be some discussion about any limitations in the methods [eg was it a complete response rate?; are there any concerns about accuracy/ completeness of survey returns?; how many participants in the focal groups?]

More could also have been made in the text of comparison with the results of previous studies reported on page 9.

Other more minor text issues to be dealt with include:

- page 1- clarify what is being decentralized in phrase "the decentralization.."
- page 1- define "intermanagement agreement"
- page 2- specify what a HRH Unit is- or does it vary in different municipalities?
- page 3- should Federative be "Federated"?
- page 4, bottom "exhaustion" should be replaced with ending"
- page 5- are there any references to support statements made at bottom of the page
- page 6- should be Pierantoni "et al"
It is also suggested that a complete list of acronyms and English translation - SGTES etc in a "box" or at beginning of text would be helpful

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

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'