Reviewer's report

Title: Thirty years after Alma-Ata: A systematic review of the impact of community health workers delivering interventions against malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea on child mortality and morbidity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Version: 1 Date: 11 February 2011

Reviewer: Peter Winch

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
=> Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
=> Yes. They are very clear about their methods. They are exemplary in this regard.

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
=> Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
=> Yes, it goes above and beyond the relevant standards

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
=> Yes

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
=> Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?
=> Quality of writing is excellent

Minor compulsory revisions:

1. The mortality estimates cited for this sentence are a little old: “Sub-Saharan Africa has only 3% of the global health workforce [7] but accounts for almost half of the 8.8 million child deaths globally [8,9].” I recommend reviewing and citing these sources re numbers of under-five deaths:


and child survival. Lancet. 2010 Jun 5;375(9730):2032-44.

2. I would like to see more in the discussion on the contrast between the amount and quality of evidence for Asia versus Africa, and the reasons for this. One reason the authors might cite is that it is easier to measure mortality outcomes in Asia, given the higher population densities. One reason for the paucity of studies from Africa is the low population densities in rural areas. Another point in that regard is that where there are studies in Africa, they come from higher density rural areas. For example, the population density in The Gambia is higher than is typical across the neighboring Sahel countries, as people are clustered along the river.

**Level of interest:** An article of outstanding merit and interest 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