Reviewer's report

Title: Striving for better health through health research in post-conflict Timor-Leste

Version: 1 Date: 30 January 2012

Reviewer: Lyndal Trevena

Reviewer's report:

This is an important paper outlining the establishment of a health research facility in one of the world's newest and developing nations Timor-Leste. I have the following suggestions for the authors.

1. The Background section is well-researched and outlines clearly the important role that research capacity building can play in health and development. This section could be strengthened by adding the paucity of published work on developing country-driven concepts for research capacity building systems. This paper in therefore novel in describing such an initiative and may serve to stimulate similar papers and debate from other nations. (Discretionary revision)

2. The Main text section is clear and well-written. However, I feel that much of the content in the discussion section should probably sit within this section. The objectives and function of the CHRD, funding and development of a research partnership should be shortened if possible and moved to this section. (Major compulsory revision)

3. The CHRD vision, objectives and key components could perhaps be summarised in a figure to make it easier for the reader to view at a glance. This would allow for some shortening of the text in this section as well. (Discretionary revisions).

4. The Discussion might be of greater interest to this journal’s readership if it considers some of the future challenges for development and sustainability of this initiative. I suggest that the authors add some thoughts on this and replace the descriptive content moved to the main text. (Major compulsory revision)

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests:

I have co-authored other work with Dr Martins on unrelated subject matter.