Reviewer's report

Title: Promoting universal financial protection: How the Thai Universal Coverage scheme was designed to ensure equity

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Reviewer: Gemini Mtei

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General comment:
This is an important study especially during this time when universal coverage is on top of reform agenda in many developing countries. The study identifies “political support" as an important aspect when countries undertake reforms in health system financing to achieve UC. The study also shows the importance of mobilizing more tax funding if the objective of UC is to be achieved. This article gives important lessons to many developing countries that a trying to expand coverage in the environment of limited financial resources.

Below are some minor comments that might help to improve the article when published.

Minor comments

1. It is stated in page 8 that the Key Informant interviews included both supporters and non supporters (politicians or policy makers). How were the non supporters identified especially because this study was conducted during the period when the UC policy has already been in place for several years? Were the supporting and non supporting views based on the current UCS design (See the last quote in page 14 of the article) or included some of the design features that might have been altered already? Are there examples of opposed features that have helped to strengthen the current UCS design (bearing in mind that not all opposition is bad)?

2. It is pointed in page 12 that “Despite the rivalry, Surayud and Democrat governments also supported UCS”. Did the Surayud and Democrats support the UCS when they came into power or there were some UC design features that they opposed during the TRT governance?

3. Did the study explore whether demands from other sectors (e.g. education,
etc) imposed tension in the allocation of more tax resources to the health sector? How did the Prime Minister managed to increase tax funding to the health sector without affecting other sectors budgets?

4. What was the role of the community in the success of UCS? Did the formal sector employees for example who were members of contributory schemes supported ‘a pure tax funding’ approach for the informal sector, including those who are able to pay?

5. It will be good to expand the background section and add a paragraph that explain the key features of other insurance schemes, CSMBS and SHI (especially on contribution design and benefits covered). For example, are all services covered under the UCS freely accessible to CSMBS and SHI members?

**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