Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 21 March 2013

Reviewer: Owen O’Donnell

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Minor Essential revisions
1. Reference 4 does not provide evidence in support of the statement made in the first sentence of the section entitled “Evidence on equity and financial protection of UCS”.

Discretionary revisions
1. The paper describes policy choices made in relation to the introduction and implementation of Universal Coverage in Thailand. Some of the descriptive material is useful, although much of it can already be found in the published literature. The paper would be of greater interest to readers if it were stronger on analysis. For example, we are told that political commitment to UC, despite the turbulent wider political context, was key to the success. But why did this near consensus political support for the policy emerge? The provision of a greatly increased budget is also identified as crucial. But how was this economically and politically feasible?

2. “…To keep political promises and [fill] a feasible financial gap of THB 30 billion, it is easy to adopt a tax financed non-contributory universal programme.” KI18 page 14.

I’m not sure that most readers would agree that adopting and implementing such a policy is “easy”. More likely, they will wonder why it was politically, administratively and economically feasible in Thailand.

3. In general, the quotations from key informants are not particularly enlightening. I think it would be more useful for readers if the authors were to distil and analyse these opinions toward giving more complete answers to the questions of why certain policy choices were made and how these were implemented.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I collaborate with two of the authors on a research project.