Author's response to reviews

Title: Capacity for health systems research in schools of public health in East and Central Africa: A mixed method approach

Authors:

Daudi Simba (daudisimba@yahoo.com)
Aggrey Mukose (amukose@musph.ac.ug)
William Bazeyo (wbazeyo@musph.ac.ug)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Reviewer's report
Title: Capacity for health systems research in schools of public health in East and Central Africa: A mixed method approach
Version: 1 Date: 25 December 2013
Reviewer: Leonard Mboera

Reviewer's report:
Capacity for health systems research in schools of public health in East and Central Africa: a mixed methods approach

GENERAL ASSESSMENT
1. The question posed by the authors is not new and but well defined

RESPONSE:
Authors appreciate the comments.

2. The methods are appropriate and well described

RESPONSE:
Authors appreciate the comments.

3. Data are sound and well controlled

RESPONSE:
Authors appreciate the comments.

4. To some extent, the manuscript adheres to the relevant standard for reporting. However, see my specific comments below

5. The conclusion is not well balanced and adequately supported by the data. See my specific comments below

RESPONSE:
Conclusion has been revised. See Conclusions part of Abstract and the Conclusion section.

6. Generally, the title accurately conveys what has been found

RESPONSE:
Authors appreciate the comments.

7. The writing is acceptable

RESPONSE:
Authors appreciate the comments.
SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Issue No. 1: Authorship: There is inconsistency in naming the authors; One with three names, others with two names

RESPONSE:
Changes made in the authors names

Issue No. 2: Abstract: The statement that “Since SPHs are the major target for HSR funding should be substantiated by facts.

RESPONSE:
Changes made and the sentence now reads as follows:-

“since SPHs are the key institutions for conducting HSR.”

Issue No. 3: The statement “This paper, one in a series of four, examines…” makes sense only when the other papers have already been published.

RESPONSES:
We plan to have the four papers published in series in one journal. We feel that the query by the reviewer will be taken care once the first publication –that is on methodology is published and read.

Issue No. 4: It is inappropriate for the authors to make some conclusion sin the Result section of the abstract section (For instance: “Except for Rwanda, there was little government funding for HSR, leading to a dependency on private donors, which is likely to distort a country’s research agenda”.

RESPONSE:
Changes made –see Result part of the Abstract.

Issue No. 5: The conclusion is not focused and does not reflect the findings

RESPONSE:
Changes made –see Conclusions part of the Abstract.

Issue No. 6: Introduction: This section is Ok, except one wonders why should it be followed by “Background” section!!

RESPONSE:
This study is part of a bigger project in health systems research undertaken by the Africa Hub in collaboration with Future Health Systems. Since the capacity assessment reported In this paper is part of the overall project intervention we feel it is important to give the reader the background to better understand how the study and the findings fits within the framework of the project.
Issue No. 7: Results: There are a number of concluding remarks under the Results Section. The authors should not make conclusions in this section.

RESPONSE:
Changes made – See page 7 subsection Staff Publication 5th sentence.

Issue No. 8: Conclusion: It is quite surprising that the authors are making citations [14] in their conclusion. This means the conclusion made is based on Ayah et al. studies and not their own study.

RESPONSE:
Changes made – See Conclusions.

References
The citation of References 14, 15, 16 is improper. The manuscripts are not even in press. If the citations are unique and necessary, then the authors should cite them as unpolished.

RESPONSE:
Since we plan to have the four papers published in series in one journal we feel that the query by the reviewer will be taken care.