Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors influencing the utilization of research findings by health policy-makers in a developing country: a case study of Mali's essential medicines list

Version: 1 Date: 14 August 2006

Reviewer: Francisco Becerra

Reviewer’s report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Policy making and decision making, as stressed by the authors are made by policy makers, not researchers, and as they also, say cultural and political scenarios have to be considered in any decision to be taken. Still, following results of any given published study per se may be shortsighted and not necessarily a correct choice. Rather than presenting a criticism to a senior staff for not following a recommendation by a paper on a traditional medication, they should have focused on the quality and design of the study performed: was it a good study design and was the study performed with high standards to be considered? was the study with such a great number of patients studied that the results were determinate to the decision to be made related the inclusion or not of a traditional medication? Was this paper a systematic review? when not presenting these facts, it is difficult to understand the criticism expressed in the paper.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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.