Reviewer's report

Title: Fulfillment of the Brazilian Agenda of Priorities in Health Research

Version: 2 Date: 18 April 2011

Reviewer: Robert Terry

Reviewer's report:

1. Does it address an important or timely issue?
Yes - well argued in the background section.

2. Is it well reasoned?
It lacks a clear rationale for the paper. As written it is a very positive narrative
there is an absence of any critical comments or lessons learned for future
activity. It says there is an independent evaluation under way I feel this might be
more useful to readers.

It would be clearer if the authors summarized, perhaps is a separate Methods
Section, the approach they took to assess how the National Agenda in Health
priorities was 'fulfilled' by the Ministry of Health i.e. "...we compared the priorities
identified with the ($) value of projects supported. The proportions supported
were all in line with the stated priorities." However, I doubt this was the case and
it would be useful to know where there were any mismatched areas and how this
might be addressed in the future. It would be interesting to understand any
limitations the authors feel they have with their assessment.

It states that the Agenda was established to most of the 'good practice'
principles. Which ones do they feel - in hindsight - were not followed. What
impact would this have had on the setting of the priorities and subsequent
funding?

3. Is it relatively balanced, or does it make plain where the author’s opinions
might not represent the field as a whole?

This appears to be an open and transparent report. However, it is clear this
paper reports an internal assessment of the work of the MoH and as a
consequence it lacks any independent verification or any critical analysis it
therefore reads a bit too much like a one-sided and positive review. It would
benefit from some critical analysis particularly whether the volume of support for
an area is in anyway adequate for the research needs in that area.

4. Is the standard of writing acceptable?

It is generally well written. In places it would benefit perhaps, from editing by a
native English speaking editor, for example paragraph 4 on page 3 - using terms
such as magnitude, incipient articulation, to impel this field, nothing more
assertive - which I do not recognize in this context.
Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Inclusion of a clear rationale and methods section. The introduction of some critical analysis, a discussion of the limitations of the approach the authors used and areas where the agenda is not adequately addressing the research needs.

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

Paragraph 4 on page 3 needs to be re-written in plain English.

Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

Once you have done this, there are also some questions for you to answer, including one that asks your advice on publication.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests