Reviewer’s report

Title: Title: Assessment of Client Satisfaction on Emergency Department Services in Hawassa University Referral Hospital, Hawassa, Southern Ethiopia.

Version: 1 Date: 26 Feb 2017

Reviewer: Yvonne C.M Jonk

Reviewer’s report:

It would be very helpful if the authors described the health care system in Ethiopia. Does Ethiopia have a single payer system so that everyone has health insurance, are there private sector insurance companies, or is everyone uninsured and has to pay for health care out of pocket, for example? Please include this information in your revisions. This has direct policy implications in terms of hospitals being able to address issues that patients have about having access to expensive prescriptions for example.

How do the patients/clients coming to the ED compare to the rest of Ethiopia’s population not only in terms of sociodemographic characteristics, but also health status (if possible), and health insurance coverage (as applicable).

Some information re what the prescription drug market looks like would also be helpful. Is there a shortage of drugs throughout the country and why? Who has access to prescription drugs - those who can afford it, who have insurance coverage, or who live in a high income neighborhoods/sections of the country? This either needs to be discussed up front, or in the discussion section as a means of explaining why low rates of satisfaction around the availability of prescription drugs exists. This would set the stage for understanding what the policy implications are, and whether the hospital can address these deficiencies. Is the problem with access to prescriptions something that the hospital has control over, or is this a nationwide issue that calls for significant health system reform?

The authors have stated that they interviewed "clients" - the majority of whom were relatives or proxies. However, the authors use various terms other than "client" throughout the paper, e.g. study participants, respondents, and even the term "patient". This is confusing. Could the authors clarify -within the paper - whether the "client" is the person who is with the patient when they come into the ED? Is this person, the client, serving as a "proxy" - i.e. are they answering on behalf of the patient, or are they answering the questions from their own perspective/experience? Is this what the WHO (which should be spelled out the first time it's used within the paper) is asking the hospitals to do - survey clients vs patients? I believe in the US the patient satisfaction surveys are supposed to be filled out by the patients after they are home and recovered, and able to share how their experience at the ED went for them. If a proxy fills it out, the proxy is doing so on behalf of the patient, and is supposed to share/convey the patient's experience, not the proxy's. Could the authors provide more details of the standard procedure being followed by hospitals in Ethiopia to assess patient satisfaction? Are all hospitals
using the same instrument, how often are they asked to administer the survey, is there a required sample size, etc.

The authors should include a paragraph re the timing of the interview - as they explained in the response to reviewer comments. For example, they should state that the clients were interviewed immediately after receiving ED services, i.e. at the time (the patient vs the client) is admitted to the inpatient ward from the ED or before the clients and/or patients return home from the ED.

Socioeconomic characteristics do not represent the patients, they represent the clients, correct? This should be clarified.

What was the timeframe of the study? The authors state that the data was collected from March to May 2014, while Table 1 states that the study was conducted from Jan to Sept of 2014. Which one is it? Please be consistent about this.

In their response to reviewers, the authors state that the total population visiting the ED during March to May 2014 was 2,229 and that they interviewed 18.3% of "clients" for the study. Was the study sample (407) representative of the 2,229 patients, or is this not a valid comparison, since the study sample consisted of clients who were not the patients coming to the ED? This should be clarified. Again, in the US, the goal is to survey a r.s. of patients coming through the ED/hospital, not clients (unless the client is responding as a proxy and on behalf of the patient) - see hyperlink below. Is the hospital surveying the "right" group of people from the WHO's perspective? This should also be clarified.


Although the table 1 lists that 8.6% of the "client" was the patient, the rest (91.4%) are referred to as "another one". Are the "other ones" relatives or friends, are they who brought the patient into the hospital, or the person who ended up picking the patient up from the hospital? Are they responding on behalf of the patient, or are they responding based on their own experience helping the patient navigate the ED process?

What definition was used to categorize patients/clients as rural/urban? Did you use a standardized approach? This should be clarified within the paper.

What survey instrument was used to assess patient satisfaction? Was it a standardized well-validated instrument that all hospitals are required to use? This should be clarified within the paper.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

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