Reviewer's report

Title: Relationship between actual and desired workplace characteristics and job satisfaction for community health workers in China: A cross-sectional study

Version: 4 Date: 13 July 2014

Reviewer: David Hanley

Reviewer's report:

Discretionary Revisions
In the Methods you identify the number of people who took part: you may want to indicate what proportion overall of people participated out of the whole available staff group.

At times your written English is a little stilted: you may want to review the flow of your writing.

Minor Essential Revisions

Lines 69 – 72: you talk about practitioners, assistant practitioners, and then general practitioners. You need to be consistent in your terminology. You could also consider giving a more rounded picture of the workforce composition, given that there are other staff groups identified in the demographic information.

There are a number of typographical errors: on a number of occasions you run numbers and words together (eg lines 62, 117 etc).

Line 67 ‘physician’, needs to be plural.

Line 72: ‘they’ : who does this specifically refer to?

In your section on Measures you refer to workplace incentive items, but then mention remuneration which is a subscale. You need to go through and ensure there is consistency when referring to items and subscales.

Line 240: this needs to be rephrased, in that you use the phrase ‘workers desirability’, which is not the correct way to refer to the desires of workers around their workplace.

Line 270 ‘precious’ : you mean ‘previous’

Line 280 ‘desired’ : you mean ‘desire’

Major Compulsory Revisions

In the Abstract you identify that the main determinants of job satisfaction include occupation and age. However, within your results, discussion and conclusions you make very little reference to the impact of occupation and age: you should give more consideration to this issue, and in particular consider the significance of occupation and age on your findings.

In your Measures section you identify that you use a 44 item list: you correctly identify within the Limitations that this list still requires comprehensive
assessment for validation and reliability. It is not clear if the original item list was altered via the panel review system you employed. The process you employed seems appropriate in the circumstances, but it seems to me that an area for further work should be establishing a context specific instrument that could be used for further studies, unless you are identifying that the work on instrument through the panel system has achieved this.

In your Results section

• you mention ERG and ‘Crowding out effect’ (line 205) you should explain this more fully.

• You discuss the relationship between fringe benefits and remuneration: you should at least consider if the development of two distinct subscales is artificial, and that overall the set of items could be considered as one subscale

• You discuss working relationships and draw conclusions around what the results indicate (lines 288 – 292) It seems an over simplistic conclusion. Your reference is from a North Vietnamese study: how valid is it to use this study to support a conclusion around the context you are looking at? The result is a significant one, but you need to review what you draw from it.

• You identify there is considerable room for improvement in narrowing the gap (lines 293 - 295) This is a very fair and significant point, but it seems wrongly placed. The fact that there is such a gap should be placed earlier in the section, as it indicates the overall position, and gives weight to the proposition that the specific issues that you then consider form your results should be addressed.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests