Reviewer’s report

Title: Equitable Resourcing of Primary Health Care in Remote Communities in Australia's Northern Territory: A Pilot Study

Version: 0 Date: 03 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Sarah Dennis

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you for asking me to review this fascinating paper to determine the resourcing requirements of high quality PHC. Overall the paper is well written and the methodology reasonably clear. However, in places I found it difficult to read particularly when the sentences were very long and complex. These sentences might benefit from being broken into smaller ones for clarity and ease of understanding.

Introduction

Given that this is an international journal it might be useful to have a brief overview / summary of the way PHC is funded in Australia. Medicare has a different meaning in the USA and so it would be good to clarify this. If there is a way of summarising the mix of fee-for-service and other funding systems in a couple of sentences it might provide useful context the readers from outside Australia and it would better set the scene for the paragraph starting on line 74.

For international audience - do you need to give a brief description of the context of the NT - e.g. population over km2?

Be careful in the aims of saying "appropriate" as you have not assessed this. You have assumed that if they have scored highly they are providing appropriate care.

Methods

It would be useful to define what the 5 improvement measures were for people wishing to replicate this study in another area.

It is not clear what you mean by population groups in line 113. Do you mean servicing a population of that size?

Were any high performing services selected by this method not "approved" by the local experts? Were there any surprising omissions?
In appreciate that this is a small pilot study but it would be useful to know how many health services are there and how many were identified as high performing and how many were invited and how many agreed. Why did they not agree?

Just being pedantic - it would be good to state explicitly which data were provided by the centre themselves and which were determined by the research team from other data sources.

Results

I think it would be useful to have a summary table of the 11 centres and their characteristics.

In table 2, it would be useful to remind the reader that these are annual costs and in line 176 that total cost per year.

Discussion

The first sentence / paragraph is very difficult to read and understand.

The second paragraph requires more explanation around what you mean by capitation approach. If you are going to discuss the results in his way here then some mention of the difference between capitation and activity based approaches should be included in the introduction.

I think the two tables (3 & 4) and some of the associated text should be in the results section as the process is briefly described in the methods. Table 4 needs more explanation in terms of what the "population" refers to and if you are making statements about significantly under-resourced then you should indicate how this was determined as it implies you have done some sort of test. If population refers to the population that the service provides then there should be 11 in table 4 and the populations in table 4 and figure 4 are slightly different - should they be the same if they are the same populations?

Minor edits

Line 26 abstract - Currently, however,……… use either but not both.

Line 86 - reword e.g. For example, Zhao et al () showed that…..

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

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
Unable to assess

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

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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