Reviewer’s report

Title: What factors impact on the implementation of clubfoot treatment services in low and middle-income countries?: a narrative synthesis of existing qualitative studies

Version: 0 Date: 28 Sep 2017

Reviewer: David A Spiegel

Reviewer’s report:

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I enjoyed reading the paper, this is important, well written, and will be of great use to individuals and institutions trying to organize delivery of clubfoot services using the Ponseti method. This highlights the importance of understanding and addressing barriers, on the importance of systems for service delivery, rather than just another report focusing on results of the "corrective" phase of treatment under optimal conditions.

Might consider discussing variations in the settings in which the services are delivered based on the literature review. For example as you know some African countries (Uganda and Malawi I believe) may have a top-down system supported by the government in which services are delivered at population level at smaller health facilities with task shifting or sharing, versus the individual clinic or academic institution in a similar low resource setting that starts from the bottom up and the treatment is completed by an orthopaedic surgeon.

Would consider adding one more reference to the list, although it would not meet inclusion criteria for the analysis, but does consider the same issues, reviews some of the same papers, and makes many of the same conclusions:


One potential limitation is that some useful anecdotal observations might come from references that were not included as they did not meet the stringent criteria for analysis, and also that a review of the grey literature might have added some additional information. I doubt that the additional info would alter the conclusions however.

A few specific comments
Line 90-91: Not sure it can be stated that Ponseti is most widely used, but it is certainly achieving much wider utilization globally

Line 96-97. Do you mean there is a drop out of patients during their treatment course?

**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 recommend additional statistical review

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

Acceptable

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