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: 25 Oct 2017

Reviewer: Bibek Banskota

Reviewer’s report:

Excellent report on barriers to clubfoot care delivery in LMIC's. The important points of resource constraints, adherence to standard Ponseti protocol and developing local leadership are well covered.

In our clubfoot program, we have placed a lot of emphasis on "training and education" as a means to help decentralize our clubfoot services in to specialized clinics that are lead by local physiotherapists trained by us. The heel cord releases can be tied up with local hospitals where appropriate facilities and expertise are available or can be developed. We have also trained orthotic staff to manufacture foot abduction braces in our decentralized clinics. All these measures have lead to reduction of the cost of care and community acceptance of our clinics.

I believe that, as in our experience, most families seeking such services in LMIC's are daily-wage earners who cannot afford an extended period of time away from home or work to seek treatment at distant centers. Thus, a strong case may be made for training local care-providers to and develop local facilities to deliver Ponseti treatment at the grassroot.

I would also suggest including"gender barrier" and "cultural barrier" that sometimes hinder successful care delivery. We have seen that in some communities, the female child is low priority for treatment. Also, in some cultures, wearing the cast for extended period of time seems to be not palatable. Sometimes, social stigma associated with disability impedes access to care. Both these could be addressed effectively with "community education".

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

Yes

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Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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