Reviewer’s report

Title: Experience of using mHealth to link village doctors with physicians: Lessons from Chakaria, Bangladesh

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Reviewer: Yiing-Jenq Chou

Reviewer’s report:

This study investigates the experiences of using call services for a group of village doctors from Bangladesh. I think this study has important policy implications as this call service, as described by the author, may be an effective way to solve the problem of inadequate professional medical manpower in the country. The paper is well-written with methodology properly described. There are some limitations of the study, which may be beyond the authors’ control at this stage. However, the authors may consider address them in the future if this call service is to be re-implemented, and this study be used as a reference for the service provider. Some of the limitations should be discussed in the Discussion section.

1. The village doctors participated were only those who joined and used the “mHealth” service. I think it is equally important to determine the reasons for not joining the program for those who did not sign up for the service. The “mHealth” program was terminated in 2013, and as suggested by the authors, the main reason was not enough calls. If this is the case, it is important to increase the coverage and it would definitely help if those who previous refused to join the program can choose to join if the program is to be re-implemented.

2. Given the program was terminated in 2013, from a practical point of view, is it possible to re-implement the program at all? In other words, how feasible is it to solve/improved the problems raised? For example, I would think “people being unfamiliar with the program” can be easily solved by some public advertisement. However, “technical instability” seems less likely to get an improvement within a short period of time. The reason I raised this point is because I think the content of this paper, if published, should serve as a guide for the authorities in charge and bring back the program as an ultimate goal. Some discussions on this may be helpful.

3. The failure of a program usually have multiple factors. Village doctors’ views are definitely important. As the authors mentioned, they did not incorporate the views from the organization charge. I think other than the organization, information from the professional doctors and the patients are equally important for a successful re-implementation of the program.

4. The author should give some further detailed information concerning the characteristics of the participants (for example, age, area of expertise, average patient volume, if available), and if possible, some comparisons between those who participated in the study and those who did not. Furthermore, what’s the
criteria used to select the subjects? How was the sample size determined?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.