Reviewer’s report

Title: The introduction of Greek Central Health Fund: has the reform met its goal in the sector of Primary Health Care or a new model is needed?

Version: 3
Date: 23 March 2014

Reviewer: Ilias-Ioannis Kyriopoulos

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory revisions: none
Minor Essential Revisions

General comment: In the manuscript, authors present their own different proposal for the organization, financing, allocation of human resources and remuneration of providers in primary health within the new context of the Greek Central Health Fund operation (EOPYY). The proposal is interesting and adequately documented despite the possible difficulties of understanding by the international audience. Nevertheless it provides the stimulus for further research and discussion, on a topic that is being redefined and redesigned due to the ongoing economic crisis, the memorandum imposed by the Troika and the new health environment in Greece. This is why I think the article is publishable, subject to the following changes and corrections:

Abstract:
• The last sentence of the background in abstract, (1st page), “The main goal of this paper is to evaluate EOPPY’s performance, mainly in PHC, since its establishment” is not true. This is not supported by the text that follows. It does not appear any performance measurement or evaluation of EOPPY. Author(s) should make the necessary corrections.
• The conclusions in the abstract are rather claims and proposals. Authors should rephrase the text.

Introduction – Background
• The brief description of the different health systems, it would be useful and appropriate to contain references to some good practices, since authors refer that their proposal was based on such good practices from developed health care systems.
• While there is a clear reference that “the methodology includes a literature review of developed systems and central sickness funds …” (2nd line of page 4), in the text that follows there are no references on the operation and best practices of those central sickness funds. It is needed to briefly make some such references.
• In page 7, there is a number in front of the title (3). Please insert “1” before the Introduction-Background section, and “2” in front of “Methods and Results from health care systems’ and funds’ review”.
In page 7, parts 3, second component, paragraph: “An insurance system...70% of the population”. It is useful to explain that the health care delivery units which recently joined structurally and functionally the NHS healthcare network are the primary care units of IKA, which were transferred to EOPYY after merging.

• In page 7, last line, please replace: “additional insurance” with “supplementary insurance”.

• Page 8, 2nd sentence of 3rd paragraph: “So far EOPYY .....unemployment”, the meaning is not well understood.

• In last line of page 8: please replace “employees” with “doctors”.

• Page 9, under table 1: please delete reference number and insert “source: EOPYY, 2013”. Once this is done, needs also to fix the numbering of references in the text and in the list at the end.

• Page 10, last paragraph: Is not clear which is the difference between “€5 per case” and “€5 per capita”, and who is going to pay this amount. Please clarify. Also in the same paragraph replace “€5 per visit, maximum 3 visits per year” with “€5 per visit, maximum 3 visits per year per each registered beneficiary” if this is valid.

• Page 11, 1st paragraph: Please specify what is the 33% and 20% (of what?) co-payment.

• Page 11, last paragraph: Please replace “agriculture health center” with “rural health centers” and “civil health centers” with “urban health centers”.

• Page 18, first line: Please replace “Papanicolaou test” with “Pap test” and in line 7 the “recipes’ errors” with “prescriptions’ errors”.

• Page 23, 2nd paragraph, second line: “a la carte” instead of “a la cart”

• Page 25, 11th line: “United States” instead of “Unite States”

• In 4. A new model of reimbursement of PHC in Greece: methods and results: please specify in a separate paragraph which are “the best practices” of the other systems, that are included in the proposal (it is useful in terms of “matching” between methods and results).

**Discretionary Revisions**

• The use of different terms for some doctors’ specialties (i.e. general practitioner vs generalist or family doctor vs family physician) is confusing and is advised to avoid it.

• Introduction: The author(s) could briefly mention data about the financial situation of EOPYY (e.g. deficit). This would be useful in terms of understanding the magnitude of the underlying problems.

• Discussion: the authors could add a comment on how the proposal can be associated with the reduction of the adverse impact of economic crisis on health and healthcare.
Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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