Reviewer’s report

Title: Barriers to universal coverage in Republic of Moldova: a policy analysis of formal and informal out of pocket payments

Version: 2 Date: 2 December 2014

Reviewer: Petra Baji

Reviewer’s report:

Well structured and informative paper on an important policy issue. I just have a few minor comments/suggestions to the authors.

Minor Essential Revisions

1) When authors present the OOP amounts in the Result section, they should mention in the text whether these are yearly or monthly amounts?

2) For the Figures and Tables the source of data should be indicated as authors used different datasets for the study.

3) p.8. line 29. “Informal payments are sometimes referred to locally in three categories: conditioned payments (perceived by patients as necessary in order to receive services), facilitation payments (offered voluntarily by patients to obtain something outside the basic service package entitlement), and gifts (given freely to express gratitude)” The authors should provide reference for this classification or framework (the same stands for Figure 1.)

Discretionary Revisions

1) It would be beneficial if the authors could provide a little bit more detailed description of the changes in the health care system during the past decade (health care reforms 2009/2010/2011 that authors mention in the introduction section)

2) It would be helpful to see what is the burden of OOPs for the households as a percent of their income (or expenditure) or as a percentage of the average income in the country. (Not a Table, just an estimation, probably in the discussion section)

3) p.9. line 22 „non-governmental organizations (NGOs) serving households (15.8%)” It is not clear for me what types of payments are these? The authors should probably clarify.

4) The authors provide an extensive description of different methods that were used in the study in the Method section. However, it would be useful for the readers, if these were shortly listed in the Introduction section too to be clear for the reader what to expect from the study.

Comment: I do not understand why is it a reasonably policy objective to decrease the share of pharmaceutical expenditure as a share of OOP payments? It can be
achieved by increasing payments for health care services too. In the CEE countries the high share pharmaceutical expenditure is common (in Hungary over 80% as well). So isn’t it a better objective to decrease OOP for pharmaceuticals?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.