Reviewer's report

Title: What is the financial incentive to immigrate? An analysis of salary disparities between Health Workers working in the Caribbean and popular destination countries

Version: 0 Date: 01 Nov 2018

Reviewer: Adrian Mackenzie

Reviewer's report:

It seems to me that, in this revised version of their paper, the authors overstate its contributions in several ways.

The title refers to "a review of the economic incentives... to migrate" yet the analysis is restricted to a single incentive: the wage gap. Related to this point, throughout the paper the authors appear to equate economic incentives with financial ones; the former are a much larger group. The abstract states that the paper "...establishes... the extent to which [the wage gap] contributes to an economic incentive to migrate": quantifying this gap does not constitute a demonstration of the extent to which it provides an economic incentive to migrate. In their discussion, the authors claim to have evaluated and compared HRH salaries in the included Caribbean and destination countries, when in fact they have only done the latter. Evaluating these salaries would involve a comprehensive assessment of them against some pre-determined criteria.

In their conclusion, the authors state that their findings "...could be used for policy changes focusing on salary and benefit adjustments, aimed at retaining HRH to the public health system within the Caribbean region." How exactly do the authors envision this happening? Are they suggesting the HRH wage gap is not already considered by HRH planners in the Caribbean working to retain the region's HRH? It seems more likely to me that Caribbean HRH planners are already keenly conscious of this gap, and yet there is little they can do to address it given the fiscal realities of the countries involved. The practical value of the paper is therefore not clear to me - this was also a problem in the earlier version.

I take no issue with the authors' methods or analyses, and I applaud their interest in better managing HRH migration from developing countries. While I recognizing this is ultimately the editors' decision, I do not think these findings warrant a paper in a scientific journal; I think alternative means of disseminating them would be more appropriate. For example, the OECD publishes similar data for generalist and specialist physicians in member countries through its OECD.STAT platform.
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.

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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