Reviewer’s report

Title: New Insight into the Informal Patients’ Payments on the Evidence of Literature: A systematic Review Study

Version: 0 Date: 04 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?

Yes - there is a clear objective

DESIGN - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?

No - there are minor issues

EXECUTION - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

Not sure - key details are missing from the manuscript

Statistics - Is the use of statistics in the manuscript appropriate?

N/A - there are no statistics in this study

INTERPRETATION - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?

Yes - the author's interpretation is reasonable

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Is the current version of this work technically sound? If not, can revisions be made to make the work technically sound?

Maybe - with major revisions
PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: I think this paper is worthy of further review though I would anticipate a revise and resubmit response rather than a straightforward acceptance. A few issues that appear to need attention include: (1) There are some well known and well cited papers that appear to have been missed - reference to Lewis (2007) Informal payments and the financing of health care in developing and transition countries, Health Affairs, 26, 4 identifies quite a number of sources that are not found here. That suggests something went wrong with the search strategy and the authors should look at the missing items and figure out what. (2) Clearly the authors are from Iran, and that explains their specific attention to (a) Iranian databases and (b) the Iranian policy context, but this specific attention fits oddly in a systematic review. (3) The introduction/background is not very comprehensive - again reference to Lewis (2007) might be helpful, as might framing in terms of UHC rather than in general precepts of medical ethics. NB. UHC emphasises affordability as well as access so is a useful starting point. (4) Also, clarify in the introduction whether all out of pocket payment is an equal, worse or slighter problem than informal payment.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

1. They should redo the literature search as it appears it has missed a major section of the literature. They should be able to avoid re-screening the articles screened out the first time if they have kept good records so this may not be as onerous as it sounds. (This may relate to design or execution - not clear).

2. The introduction/background should be rewritten as suggested above.

3. That will affect the content of the remaining sections, although I don't believe they will be significantly affected - ie. while the identification of literature has been less than comprehensive as required for a systematic review, I believe the domains will not need to be significantly revised.

Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.

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

No
Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

Declaration of competing interests
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No