Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 26 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Reviewer 3

Reviewer's report:

PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:

OBJECTIVE - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses one or several testable research questions? (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 sufficient technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?

No - there are minor issues

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?

No - there are minor issues

OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL - Has the author addressed your concerns sufficiently for you to now recommend the work as a technically sound contribution? If not, can further revisions be made to make the work technically sound?

Probably - with minor revisions
PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:

GENERAL COMMENTS: This study addresses an important topic in the health care financing in developing countries. The authors have already made significant revisions to respond to six external reviewers' comments. However, since the authors did not provide previous reviewers' comments and their specific responses to these comments, this reviewer is unable to assess the responsiveness and has comments that may be overlapping with previous reviewers.

REQUESTED REVISIONS:

Two main concerns about the methods of the review: cash payment is significantly from the other informal payment, such as gifts. The authors claimed that informal payment was prevalent across countries, but they need to breakdown between cash payment and other informal payments, which can help the audience to interpret the results. Moreover, whether informal payment was only to cover the costs of health care or is type of "bribery" to health care providers to gain advantages to other patients.

The second concern is that two languages were used in the search: English and Persian. If the search is not focusing only on informal payment in Iran, this search strategy will skew the results across countries. For example, now 9 out of 62 included studies were from Iran and it is not clear whether the results were proportion to all the country-specific studies in the field. It is likely more studies in Spanish, German, or Chinese published but not included in this review.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS/SUGGESTIONS:

No

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.

No

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:

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

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5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

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I declare that I have no competing interests