Reviewer’s report

Title: Handling healthcare workforce planning with care: where do we stand?

Version: 2 Date: 1 April 2015

Reviewer: Kaspar Wyss

Reviewer’s report:

We asked for major revisions/restructuring of the paper.

While most of our initial comments (especially the minor comments and the necessary language editing) have been taken up, we are not fully satisfied in how authors have been dealing with two major compulsory revisions. Thus we highlight again the areas we consider in need of improvement.

• We have not received an adequate response on our general observation and repeat this again here: “The manuscript contains a substantial amount of information and is structured along two distinct topics. The authors should consider splitting the present version into two manuscripts, one providing a summary on major approaches to estimate HRH requirements and a second one focusing on the history of HR planning. ….”. We have here not received any response on this concern.

• We continue to have concerns with what is labelled as “background” section. Our initial comment was: “The structure of the manuscript has to be improved and be aligned to standards as prevailing for scientific manuscripts….., it should be structured along an introduction, methods, results (possibly combined with the discussion) and the conclusions. Currently there is a forth and back starting with an introduction section, followed by the methods and going back to a background section. ….”. The background section is maintained in the revised version and we continue to struggle with this. Albeit the authors indicate that they have internally discussed options for a revised structure, we cannot identify a strong rational why this section is not merged either with the introduction or the result section. Alternatively the background section could be included in section “approach and methods”. If so, the current background section would have to be integrated into methods section and to be presented as the approach to the research question.

In addition to our earlier comments, we do have one additional observation relating to the term “economic (or effective demand)”. We struggle with this term and the definition given in page 9. The authors should consider relying on the term “utilisation/service use based planning” or something similar.

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.