Reviewer's report

Title: Human Resources for Primary Health Care in Africa: Progress or Stagnation?

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Reviewer: Yohannes Kinfu

Reviewer's report:

The authors raise a timely and interesting topic. I also found the background and aim of the research adequate. However, disappointingly the quality of the paper is below standard, both in terms of content and the attention given to editorial matters. The copy I received for review contained track changes, and in some instances the references do not match with the content under discussion (see for example: Reference number 14 in Table 1). Similarly, proper axis labels were missing in all the figures shown in the paper. On the other hand, the reference materials used in the paper were also either outdated or omit relevant publications on health workforce issues in Africa. For instance, the WHO Annual Statistics used in the paper is from for 2010, whereas there is now a 2014 version. Similarly, there are now new estimates and publications on maternal mortality than used in the paper.

Content wise, there is clear disconnection between the topic of the paper, and what are discussed in the results section. None of the evidence presented in the paper address the key question of the research (i.e. whether there was progress or stagnation in primary health work force in the countries under study). As a result, the discussion and policy implications presented are unfounded. The absence of references on important research work on health workforce shortage in Africa, and on future training needs and other strategies also reflects an important gap in the paper.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

None