Reviewer’s report

Title: Posting and Transfer: key to fostering trust in government health services

Version: 2  Date: 3 July 2015

Reviewer: Gustavo Nigenda

Reviewer’s report:

Discretionary revisions:

The new version is greatly improved and I think it should be published as a commentary or letter to the editor. However I still think that the paper has important gaps that could be considered by authors. These suggestions could be considered voluntarily by the authors.

1) The scope of the paper is on developing countries but realities are so different in different settings that it would be relevant to establish fundamental differences among these settings (eg. social, economic, political and health systems organization). Policies in favor of improving Posting & Transfer in different countries may vary enormously according to these characteristics.

2) While I agree that Posting & Transfer could be understood from a political point of view, the document stresses too much attention on the role of institutions and decision-makers while giving little attention to the role of workers and their representative bodies.

3) Indeed, there are many implications on the role of workers about the possibility of making policy feasible. In my view it is not adequate to speak of health workers as a whole universe without making differences among professional (particularly doctors) and technical groups.

4) It has been reported broadly that efforts made by countries to post and transfer doctors to rural and underserved areas have been the most frustrating ones, while there are various success stories regarding other categories.

5) Doctors play a very important role in the provision of care but at the same time as a political group they have interests that do not share with other occupational groups. In many middle income countries, care is organized around them and they usually dominate the scenario and obtain higher benefits than other groups.

6) Finally in various countries health workers unions play a key role in the success or failure of P&T policies. Where unions exist they normally represent an important political actor and have strong influence in the preference of individual workers. A mention about their role incorporated in the analysis.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable
Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests