Reviewer’s report

Title: Emerging Roles and Competencies of District and Sub-district Pharmacists: a Case Study from Cape Town

Version: 1 Date: 22 May 2015

Reviewer: Isabel Emmerick

Reviewer’s report:

General Comments
The paper brings up an interesting topic in the field.

Major Compulsory Revisions
Abstract
Please include clearly the objective of the paper in the last phrase of the Background or as a specific item in the abstract according to the journal recommendations.

The word “emerged” could be replaced by “were identified”, as the term “significant” is related to statistic differences, I would replace it for “important” differences or “relevant” differences.

It was not clear the use of the term “organizations”. Are they providers? Are there two different providers? (this aspect repeats through the paper.

Background
The background is too long and my suggestion is to reduce it in order to be more focus on the paper topic.

Overall review on the English, there is words repeated in the same paragraph eg. “disease burden” in the first paragraph in the Background.

In the same paragraph is not clear the “primary levels”, is it the primary health care level.

The term “cadres” is not clear, I would suggest replace it in all occurrences by “health careers” or “careers” that is a more conventional term to describe the profession.

The term “emerged” is overused, I suggest using more adequately.

The two last paragraphs on the background are very confusing and the objective is not clear. Is this paper part of a bigger research?

I suggest review the objective and re-write it. “This paper describes the new roles and related competencies of the pharmacists working on the district and sub-district levels in Cape Town”. The research is how this new roles were identified.

Methods
Include one paragraph describing the overall research method. Separate the Data collection from the analysis.

…”I conducted participatory”…. It is not appropriated the use of the first person in a scientific manuscript, please replace it in all parts of the paper.

Please revise the term “organizations”, are they Primary Health Care providers?

The word “evolve” is not clear, it means the research “expanded”??

I suggest include a table organizing the phases, the number of subjects in each phase, as well as the number of interviews and focus groups in each district and/or provider.

Include references for the methods used, including thematic analysis, focus groups, interviews, and explain why the method use was chosen.

Results/Discussion

The first paragraph of the results should be moved to the methods session

Conclusion

The conclusion is not clear how the results from the research could be used to support decision-making process on health policy related issues.

Tables

The tables are not formatted as tables. The information in the “tables” are more suitable for boxes as they are now, I suggest restructure them as real tables or format them accordingly as boxes.

Try to present the information from the same year, or the latest year or the year when the research was conducted. Bringing the information within 5 years difference from the providers does not inform about the situation at a giving point in time.

Example on how to organize the table.

Minor Essential Revisions

Abstract

Adjust the abstract after the changes

Background

I would suggest remove the sub-titles in the background.

Methods

The title of the study set case study nevertheless there is no mention on this in the methods session.

Results/Discussion

No comments

Conclusion

Discretionary Revisions

Not applicable
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'