Author’s response to reviews

Title: The evolution of the National Licensing System of Health Care Professionals: A qualitative descriptive case study in Laos

Authors:

Miwa Sonoda (sonomiwa@gmail.com)
Bounkong SYHAVONG (bounkongs@yahoo.com)
Chanphomma VONGSAMPANAH (chanphomma@yahoo.com)
Phisith PHOUTSAVATH (psavath@gmail.com)
Phengdy INTHAPANITH (phengdys@yahoo.com)
Arie ROTEM (arierotem@gmail.com)
Noriko FUJITA (norikof@it.ncgm.go.jp)

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Author’s response to reviews:

#Reviewer1

Q.

Section re research method needs clarification and consistent description. For example:

Abstract describes use of 'A qualitative case study methodology'
Line 34, page 5 refers to a 'qualitative study methodology'
Method is most like 'qualitative descriptive case study' methodology.

A.

The research method was revised and standardized as "qualitative descriptive case study methodology" in accordance with your advice.
Q.

Authors should then consider adjusting the manuscript accordingly, for example Line 13, page 11 simply states 'This study'… suggested that this is adjusted to "This qualitative descriptive case study …..'"

A.

"This study" was replaced by "This qualitative descriptive case study", in accordance with your advice.

Q.

Re ethics approval - Line 29, page 13. Authors declare that interviews were conducted in an ethical manner; however, no formal ethics clearance was obtained for this study. Recommended that the editor determine if this is consequential or otherwise to the publication of this manuscript.

A.

I added some detail of ethical consideration in the Method in accordance with your comment. Moreover, this study was carried out as one of the activities of the ODA project by JICA, in close collaboration with Lao MOH including the Minister. At that time, a formal ethics clearance of IRB (institutional review board) wasn't required because this activity was positioned as a Laos' government activity and surely authorized by Lao MOH. In Laos, IRB (institutional review board) has been introduced quite recently and only available in the MOH. In other words, official approval by the MOH represents an authorization by the IRB.

#Reviewer 2

Q.

In this version, the necessity of Table 2 has emerged as question to the reviewer. I'm not sure whether is appropriate to present this information in a table format - since we have more important tables-, maybe to inserting the information from Table 2 to page 7 would be sufficient.

A.

Table 2 was deleted because the main point of table 2 already is explained in the III − 1.
Q.

Regarding the conclusions, I would suggest to include the significance of health policy interventions on continuous development of HRH and the benefits of health workforce planning activities (e.g. stakeholder involvement, legislation, information sharing etc.) in general, as reference you can use D043 materials accessible at: http://healthworkforce.eu/work-package-4/

A.

The sentence below was newly inserted at the end of Conclusion.

A policy intervention and strengthened governance for continuous development of human resources for health are essential in order to achieve a health system that can guarantee universal access to health care and social protection to all citizens.