Reviewer's report

Title: Physicians' perceptions on the impact of telemedicine on recruitment and retention in underserved areas: a descriptive study in Senegal

Version: 1 Date: 07 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Mihiretu Kebede

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for inviting me to review the revised version of this manuscript.

This version has improved a lot of the concerns I had in the previous version. There was a disjoint between the title and the content of the manuscript. That is by far well-improved in this version. However, there are still issues to improve before this manuscript proceeds further. I have read the point-by-point response to the comments I myself provided as a reviewer. I was expecting the authors to politely address the comments and provide their arguments to either accept the comments and improve the write up or defend with justifiable explanations. Unfortunately, that was not the case.

I sincerely still hope that the authors will come up with better justifications and improve the manuscript for the following issues.

Abstract: The first sentence of the conclusion section of the abstract is a repetition of the results. The authors need to conclude the results and provide outlook of their results.

Introduction: The Introduction is still very shallow. The authors mentioned Duplantie et. al category of the factors (the authors mentioned it is not a framework) that could have positive impact on recruitment and retention of physicians. However, these factors needs to be explained in the introduction than just listing them as names. It is important to cite additional references to support the argument. The assumption they have provided is these factors affect retention and recruitment. This needs to be well-argued using literature. Later in the results of the study, these factors are reflected. However, none of the factors are explored in the literature of the introduction.

The importance of the study is not also well justified in the introduction. In the response letter, I have read very good explanations of what this study will contribute but there is no such information in the introduction.
Methods: I feel the data is very old. The data was collected in 2014. We are on mid-2017. Human resource dynamics and technology specifically when it comes to telemedicine it is highly dynamic and quickly changing.

Sampling: This is a qualitative study. In qualitative study, there is no culture of using probability (random) sampling method. The authors mentioned they have used random sampling method to randomly select 30 physicians in each category. In qualitative studies, we normally do key informant interviews with the people who we believe they give detailed explanation of the context we are studying. The rational is we will be able to enrich our data by interviewing people with experiences and knowledge of the context. The use of random sampling for qualitative study is quite odd and not convincing.

Abstract and Methods: Fixing sample size to a certain number (in this case 30) is not appropriate in qualitative studies. We normally interview informants until we reach the level of saturation (no emergent ideas are coming). The authors responded to this comment that they fix the sample size because of the theory of planned behaviour recommend a sample size of 30. However, that is not mentioned in the methods section. The use of the theory of planned behavior also needs justification in the methods.

Data collection: I still resist the questions are superficial, fragmented and they are not detailed enough to understand the situation in detail. It is simple results of opinion questions.

In the response letter, the authors mentioned it is easier trainee physicians than GPs. Are these trainee physicians residents? If yes, then the authors need to classify specialist physicians, residents and GPS and summarize their opinions.

Minor comments

Study design and participant: Line 5, the authors wrote "In 2014, they were…..", Please change the word "they" to "there"

Results: Contextual factors, "In some district….." Change district to districts
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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