Reviewer’s report

Title: Bridging the Human Resource Gap in Surgical and Anesthesia Care in Low-Resource Countries: A Review of the Task Sharing Literature

Version: 0 Date: 21 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Caris E. Grimes

Reviewer’s report:

This is a review of the literature on task sharing. In general, it is well written. However, the main problem with the paper is that there are no low income country authors on it. It is no longer ethically acceptable for high income country authors to pronounce recommendations on what low income ministries and institutions should do without substantial involvement of those involved in the relevant field in the relevant country or region. The results need to be looked at again and I would recommend involving two LMIC authors from different perspectives. I would suggest someone like Nyengo Mkandawire who pioneered task shifting in Malawi and is accessible by email, and a member of WACS to look at the results and findings from the alternative perspective - someone like Ben Nwomeh may be able to provide this viewpoint. If these are addressed, this greatly strengthens the paper and increases its validity. It will also help you with your interpretation and recommendations - I think you are missing some of the finer points of disagreement and the nuances associated with this. You will need to ensure that any additional authors meet the ICMJE criteria for authorship and so they will need to assist with the interpretation of the data etc.

The other points only become relevant once this major problem is addressed. These smaller issues include:

- defining and referencing your definition for 'task shifting', 'task sharing' and 'task creep'.
- explaining what is meant by 'technology disruption'
- explaining exactly what you mean by 'grey literature sources were consulted....' This is very ambiguous.
- the search strategy should be attached as a supplementary document
- the PRISMA diagram is not done correctly. It usually starts with the total number of articles revealed by the search strategy, how many after removal of duplicates etc
- why were articles before 1996 excluded? Were non English articles included?

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Acceptable

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