**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Human Resource Information System Implementation Readiness in the Ethiopian Health Sector: A cross-sectional study

**Version:** 0 **Date:** 23 Jul 2017

**Reviewer:** Fritz Fleur

**Reviewer's report:**

The manuscript „Human Resource Information System Implementation Readiness and Associated Factors in Public Hospitals and Health Departments of the Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia: A cross-sectional study” is an interesting study about the readiness of HR staff to use HRIS in a state in Ethiopia. It is mainly useful for the policy makers and implementers in Ethiopia and in countries/regions which aim to implement similar systems.

The manuscript however lacks some structure and the English language needs intensive editing before publication. I will give my comments sections by section.

**TITLE**

I would like to suggest to use a shorter title, details about the study/region etc. can be given in the abstract. For example: Human Resource Information System Implementation Readiness in the Ethiopian Health Sector: A cross-sectional study

In the authors list please check the journal format, e.g. if you have MSc I think the BSc does not need to be mentioned, also mentioning diplomas are not needed I guess)

What does Mihiretaabush in line 27 mean?

**ABSTRACT**

In line 9 you introduce the HRIS (make sure to introduce the abbreviation there and then use it consequently throughout the manuscript), is this a specific system you refer to or HRIS in general? If specific you need to describe it later in the background section.

Line 25: Since you already mention the location in the background you could leave it here, otherwise you should also add Ethiopia.

Line 27/28: In the abstract you do not need to mention the statistical software, especially since it is standard what you use. Just say something like „The data were entered and analysed with
statistical software”. The following lines about the (descriptive) statistics are also not very interesting in an abstract since you use standard methods. It would be more interesting in the methods to know which questionnaire you chose and why and what the associated factors are. In line 35 you mention a checklist, how was that developed?

In your conclusion you should mention what you recommend before rollout since this was your argument for your objective.

BACKGROUND

Page 3, Line 30 and following: do you use the study from Bangladesh as example to the paragraph above or is it somehow related to your study? The flow of arguments in this background section is not quite clear here. You mention this and other studies in more detail on the next page. Only mention what you need to come up with your objective or what is needed to be known as background information to understand your study.

Page 3, In line 50 why are there data discrepancies?

Page 4, line 4: can you give an example of HR data?

Page 4, line 17: what is HRHIS and how is that different from the HRIS?

Page 4, line 30: which list?

Page 4, line 39: why do you refer to "firms"? Are you not talking about organisations in the health sector, e.g. hospitals?

Page 4, line 43: why "only"? What implication does that have on your objective?

Page 5, line 46: It is better to clearly say: Our objective is…

In the following sections make sure to structure everything according to your objectives from the background.

METHODS

Page 6

Line 10: is the Amhara National Regional State an Ethiopian region or state, can you explain this to someone who does not know the Ethiopian structure? In line 15 you then have to mention Amhara Regional State not anymore since you already introduced the study location.

Line 15: the study population is redundant, please only mention once and complete.
Line 18 and following: clearly mention inclusion/exclusion criteria of your study. If someone is absent it is an obvious exclusion.

Line 29 and following is redundant. However you should mention how many managers you included (they were not part of the 288?) Also in line 42 it is not clear whether this includes the managers or what you decided for them.

Line 45: why 83?

Line 55: was the interview guideline and checklist developed by you (how?) or did you use any standard tool? Also later in line 58 please explain why you chose the WHO tool and give a reference for it. Please add all three tools as supplementary material.

Line 57: how did you select key informants (you might mention that in the inclusion criteria).

Page 7

Line 6: it is not quite clear how you chose the factors. On which literature was it based upon? Is the observation checklist you mention here the same as before (in that case it is redundant)?

Line 11: please mention that Amharic is the local language spoken in the study location. Was the interview done in the local language or English?

Line 15: Were the HIT independent? How did you chose them?

Line 21: What does "in a way" mean?

Line 28: can you give examples of errors?

Line 55: Is the bold writing a heading (then you need to repeat) or layout error? How did you adapt the WHO tool, by the threshold or do you mean any other adaptation?

RESULTS

Why were 246 included in the study, was that because of the criteria or was that the response rate? Can you include information about the job positions the HR employees have? Please also report how many organisations were included and how many staff the had on average.

Page 8

Line 18: I do not think that marriage information is interesting for this study.

Line 23: what does the salary mean, can you classify that in low/middle/high since the reader does not know the Ethiopian economy and what birr are?
Line 31: delete "of hospital managers…" since you repeat it in the next sentence.

Line 39: do you mean technical instead or organizational infrastructure?

Line 46: for how many staff members? It is more interesting to know how many are sharing one computer.

Line 53: If they do not have a separate room, where do they sit? In line 55 with seats you mean an actual seat or the workplace?

Page 9

Line 9 following: is that from the interview or observations? The whole paragraph or just that sentence to support the result from above? The structure here is not clear.

Line 19 following: why is that aligned? (also later answers)

Line 24: is that the same respondent as the one above?

Line 31: here you mention the number of organisations, please put that in the beginning of the results section as characteristics of your study population/location.

Line 45/46: If they were comfortable does that mean they already use the system?

Line 58: what does "manipulate" mean?

Page 10, line 14 and following needs structuring.

Page 11, line 4 and following also needs a clear structure.

Page 11, line 18: the overall readiness might be reported in the beginning of the results (after the socio demographics) and then you could report all the single values. Then you would also have an answer to your objectives in the beginning of the results.

Page 11, line 50: are the challenges you report here based on the interviews? You might need to mention this in the methods then and report it here accordingly (structure!).

Page 12, line 4/10: you say second and third, what is first and how did you classify this?

In general the structure of your results is not clear. Please present it according to your objective and methods.

DISCUSSION

Page 12, line 30: with the items you mean the questionnaire you used?
Page 12 line 33 and all of the following is just repeating the results, this is not necessary in a discussion. Please just refer to the result and then discuss it, that means to compare it with other studies and interpreting it.

Page 14

The limitations of the study should be a subheading in the discussion. Why could there be a bias? Are the observation and self-reported responses from the same study subjects?

The discussion is a bit weak. Please first answer your objective, then compare your results with similar studies, then find explanations for your results (especially if you have surprising findings) and lastly say what this means for your objectives and give open questions/future research based on your findings.

REFERENCES

Many of the references are not accessible, there are typos and it is not clear what they are (journal or conference for example?). Please check numbers 2,4,5,7,11,12,21,22,26,29,31

Especially: for 2 can you give a link, for 4 are there page numbers, write full reference of 12

GENERAL

English language editing needed. For example check your use of capital letters and of articles like „the“, „a“ etc. I will give you some language examples here but the whole manuscript needs a thorough correction.

Abstract: line 10 "by the" instead of in Federal Ministry… Line 21 "An institution based…" Line 25 "the Amhara…" and "A self-administered…"

Background: capital letters in lines 22/23. Line 36 "implantation"?? Line 44 based is redundant.

In the results all citations from your interviewed staff are difficult to understand.

In references for example 17, Human Resources for Health.

Please use the abbreviations consequently. For example HRIS is not always used. Introduce it at the first appearance and then use only the abbreviation. Make sure that the abbreviation list only contains those which are used more than three times in the text - all others do not need an abbreviation but can be written as full text.
In the ethics approval statement, page 15 line 12 starting from "no need of..." can be deleted and simply written as "their names were anonymized".

Please revise the authors contributions (e.g. "was" involved. Final approval was given by all, so no need to mention for MK, "conceive" an idea sounds strange)

In the acknowledgements page 16, line 10 you can delete "and get this stage" and please write the department name in capital letters.

**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**Declaration of competing interests**
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

I have no competing interests in this paper.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report
including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal