Reviewer’s report

Title: Human resource for health reform in peri-urban areas: an exploratory study of the impact of policy interventions on healthcare workers in Epworth, Zimbabwe

Version: 1 Date: 06 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Nathanael Sirili

Reviewer's report:

General impression: The authors have taken sometime to address most of the comments well.

Specific comments

1. Abstract: My comments are well addressed

2. Background: My comments are well addressed

3. Methods and materials: Some few comments
   a. The authors state that they piloted the interview guide (line 182), the reader would like to understand as to what group of informants this was done, it is clear that qualitative research is a flexible design and only pre-testing of the tools could be enough.
   b. Line 199 to 200…I assume it is between 30 and 45 minutes (the word minutes is missing)
   c. Sample size calculation
      i. Although the authors state that they used a formula for finite population, they have displayed the formula for infinite population size.
      ii. The value of p, in this case the percentage of performance as called by the authors is not given and thus one cannot check the mathematics given.
   d. Data analysis
      i. Qualitative data analysis is superfluous described, one cannot follow
      ii. Although in their responses they have stated that they triangulated data collection methods to ensure validity and reliable dataset, the authors did not address how they ensured trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability and reliability)

4. Results: The authors have not stated anything regarding the previous comments which are; The results are detailed enough to present the message as intended, however;
i. The qualitative quotes are too long, need to be revised and focused

ii. The section needs to succinctly have a tighten focus on the aim of the study

5. Discussion

Although the authors have added some references, they have still added little that limit the scientific community and policy makers in other places to benefit from this paper. Policy reforms for addressing the health workforce issues has happened in many places and introduction of cadres like community health workers has taken place eg. Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania, India, Vietnam, Pakistan and many other developing countries. The authors may need to dig more literature from these places to benefit readers by having both the Zimbabwe perspective but with interpretation that is transferrable and have contextual comparison.

6. Conclusion: Satisfactory but can be improved after addressing the raised issues.

**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:

Acceptable

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