Reviewer’s report

Title: Microeconomic Institutions and Personnel Economics for Health Care Delivery. A Formal Exploration of what Matters to Health Workers in Rwanda

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Reviewer: Neha Batura

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written article, with a clear research question, methodology and discussion of results, that is of importance to the management and development of human resources for health.

I do have a few suggestions that would improve the impact of the paper.

1. The authors refer to ‘microeconomic institutions’. It would be worthwhile to situate these within the health system so that a non-economics reader can make clear links.

2. The authors highlight the scarcity of literature in this area, but there is no strong motivation for why this research question is important to explore, and why the role of institutions is central to the performance and motivation of health workers.

3. Several of the authors footnotes (#1-8) should actually be appearing in the main text, as they provide much of the context for and background to the key issues being discussed and the study setting.

4. There is a typo on page 4, line 2.

5. There might be a missing citation in line 26, Page 4.

6. There is no justification for the use of FGDs for this study. When asking questions, especially those that might be perceived as ‘risky’ for respondents, in-depth interviews are often preferred.

7. There is a limited amount of detail presented about the methods for analysis of transcripts. Was this a thematic analysis? Was consensus coding applied? Were the transcripts analysed in French, or were they translated into English before analysis.

8. In the discussion (page 21, line 24), the authors say that there is limited evidence on the relationship between payment and performance in the health sector. However, there is a large body of research in health economics, and health systems research (particularly the work of Paulin Basinga, Ellen van de Poel); and a fair number of studies on performance based
financing of health systems, especially in Rwanda, that might help situate some of this study's findings outside of development economics literature.

Minor suggestion for presentation: It would be good to integrate the quotes from transcripts with the texts of the results section as this makes for a stronger reinforcement of findings. However, I leave this to the author's discretion.

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