Reviewer’s report

Title: Exploring the space for task-shifting to support nursing on neonatal wards in Kenyan public hospitals

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Reviewer: ELVIS ADU

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In this paper, the authors studied the topic "Exploring the space for task-sharing to support nursing on neonatal wards in Kenyan public hospitals" using ethnography. Based on the findings the authors concluded that "sharing can inform more formal task sharing projects as they seek to identify tasks most easily shared, and how best to support and work with busy nurses". The paper tackled a very important subject of task-sharing that is emerging in the conversations on going in HRH literature.

The paper provides useful information for readers and the challenges posed by insufficient human resources in the NBU was well articulated, however certain concerns need to be addressed.

1. Throughout the work, the authors seem to use the terms task-shifting and task-sharing interchangeably which confuses the reader as to which one was their main focus. In practice, task-shifting focuses on delegation of duties whereas task-sharing incorporates workplace strategies in order to build collective input of the team. Picking one of the themes under which results were written as "task delegation in practice" suggests that authors were dealing with task-shifting instead of task-sharing so authors need to clarify that and maintain focus.

2. In exploring the space of task-sharing, the authors should balance their review of literature to help readers appreciate the pros and cons in task-sharing as a policy, since a lot of studies have also concluded on task-sharing inability to resolve the HRH challenges, as alluded to by authors that, it is not a "fix all" concept.

3. Methodology looks a bit scanty, authors should elaborate more on their methodology to cover the scientific reasons for selecting respondents who had worked in NBU for just two weeks, whether the interviews were structured or semi-structured and the reasons for that decision, how long each interview lasted and the number of questions asked.

4. Under results, nurses interviewed expressed skepticism (Agnostic) about the formal institutionalization of task-sharing because of some legitimate concerns but authors in their conclusion stated the feasibility of formal institutionalization without recommending any practical implication or policy direction as to how it can be implemented. It is suggested that authors should add recommendations on formal
institutionalization of the topic studied. Again with this contradiction, based on what did authors make such conclusion?

5. Authors should add the limitation(s) of the study so it inform generalization and also future studies.

Others

i. In line 228, authors made reference to the views of senior nursing officers interviewed but did not provide any evidence to that effect.

ii. In line 161, authors question on what guides respondents when they have shortages and the response given do not match.

iii. Proof reading should be done to correct some errors.

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