Reviewer's report

Title: "Posting policies don't change because there is peace or war": staff deployment challenges for two large health employers during and after conflict in Northern Uganda

Version: 0 Date: 18 Dec 2018

Reviewer: Susanne Becker

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for what would have been some very interesting on-the-ground research with documents and participants.

Overall, the paper is an interesting read and I provide the following comments for your consideration. Some word choices throughout caused me to reread sections several times to gain a clear understanding. I will note these for you.

Abstract 34 - Change 'about' consider qualitative techniques for data collection ...investigating the...
Abstract 46 - It reads as though the health managers are working for both providers - consider changing to clarify
Abstract 49 - Consider rewording 'did their best'
Abstract 54 - Consider moving 'given sufficient autonomy' to line 53... However, given....,

Background 76 - Add end of parentheses after 5]
Background 87 - Font of [13] different to all others
Background 89 - Context of 'while supervision was limited' not clear
Background 90 - Trading centres, - should this be a semi colon?
Background 106 - Consider adding reference to clarify 'level III' - or could expand in Table 1
Background 111 - Reference #16 is a duplicate of #15 in the reference list - needs to be changed

Methods 118 - Consider adding a little more information of why these two providers chosen OR this could be done in the 'Study Setting' section - I would find it interesting as a reader
Methods 120- Consider changing 'used' to using to improve flow of reading

Study populations 143 - In Methods 134 you clarify that 'Lacor' refers to both hospital and satellites. Here you have Lacor hospital - I think you are referring to both, and as a reader I took it to mean just the hospital. Consider which is correct.

Data collection 152 - Transfers is duplicated in parentheses
Data collection 153 - Consider brief explanation of why these four documents chosen
Data collection 158 and 159 - Here you use 'systems', everywhere else 'practice' so I was trying to work out if this was something different. Consider.
Data collection 161 - Could the IDIs with health workers be a separate sentence?
Data collection 164 - 'Interviews conducted ...' As this is before the health workers discussion - when were the HWs interviews conducted? At the same time or different?

Data collection 165 - '...from the start...' Do you mean their entire career? Consider clarifying

Data collection 167 - Consider moving last sentence 'A total of...' to 'Study population' section - I wanted to know more about the participants up front. Also did all participants work through the conflict and post-conflict era? You use the word respondents - how were they recruited?

Data Analysis 174 Consider adding a reference for content analysis method.

Data analysis 175 - 'at various points in time' - consider clarifying - do you mean throughout the pre/during/post conflict time?

Data analysis 177 - Three (3) AND consider making it clearer that the three sections came from the document review.

Data analysis 179 - 'bonding in relation to...' Consider using same words you have later in the paper which were much clearer to understand

Data analysis 180 - Do all the first few words need capitals?

Data analysis 181 - Consider adding in your research questions

Data analysis 182 - Consider adding reference for Thematic Analysis; Consider describing why your 'pre-determined' themes were chosen.

Data analysis 184 - Not clear how or what 'summaries for topics produced' came about

Data analysis 186 - Consider deleting 'and'

Data analysis 189 and 192 - 'Lacor hospital' just the hospital, or should it be 'Lacor'?

Results 280 - 'would'. Would? or maybe could or may? Also may read better if you clarify what quality is compromised.

Results 298 - Watch consistency of capitals 'Nurse' and also midwife Vs MW

Results 308 - References 23 and 29 might be the same document

Results 314 - Spell out/explain DANIDA

Results 381 - Consider adding reference earlier after 'conflict'

Results 437 - Consider changing to affecting

Results 463 - Consider changing 'after the' to post,

Discussion 487 - Consider changing 'a' to the period

Discussion 489 - Consider '... during the conflict and in the immediate post conflict period'

Discussion 492 - Consider deleting 'and'

Discussion 500 - Consider changing 'in' to For Lacor

Discussion 515 - DPs?

Discussion 517 - Because previous sentence about Liberia - consider clarifying where back to Uganda, or still Liberia.

Discussion 527 - Delete 'both'

Discussion 529 - 'Both of these examples' - not clear which examples you are referring to

Conclusions 566 - Consider word choice 'shocks'. I think you could stick with crises etc.

References

Consistency of capitals in journal titles for Ref. 8 and 9
Duplicate Ref. 15 and 16
Query same document Ref. 23 and 29

Thank you again, and all the best with taking this manuscript further.

Susanne.

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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