Author’s response to reviews

Title: The children’s nursing workforce in Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, South Africa and Zambia: generating an initial indication of the extent of the workforce and training activity

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Author’s response to reviews:

Thank you, we are delighted that you consider that the revisions made mean that the manuscript is potentially acceptable for publication in Human Resources for Health. We are happy to make the further revisions suggested. Our point by point response to the comments made by the reviewers is below. We have also emailed a version of the manuscript with changes tracked. Page and line numbers refer to the previous submission (February 2019).

Editor

1 Section on Ethical approval

"The study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the [institution name redacted for blinding of manuscript] (HREC REF: 411/2017)." The journal operates an open peer review process, hence, please add the Institution here. This also applies to the section on Declaration. Thanks.

Done

2 I suggest to drop Table 4. These are estimates that are too basic (relying on only one data point in time) which is scientifically not sound, moreover, these are clearly no “projections” (line 29, same page), please revise
We do not want to over-claim with regard to numbers that you correctly highlight are based on one data point. However, the information in Table four also functions as part of the triangulation of data that underpins the study design, enabling comparison of the reported outputs for these countries against the numbers of nurses in practice. We therefore don't want to remove Table four, but we have revised the wording in the paragraph immediately above to remove the word ‘projections’ and make very clear that these are estimates based on figures for one year only, as follows:

Using the survey data obtained, an attempt was made to estimate training output to date for Kenya, Malawi and Zambia. As data were only available for a single year for these countries, the resulting estimations cannot be considered accurate, but are presented in Table four for illustrative purposes.

The caption for the table also positions it clearly as an estimation.

3 Page 14, line 56ff. please revisit the wording and replace “shape” with “composition” instead of having two terms or better clarify what you mean by “shape”

"The shape (composition) as well as the size of the health workforce is an important consideration when seeking to manage health workforce shortages, requiring a focus on more than simply ‘strength in numbers’ [17,19]."

Done

4 Flow of manuscript (in line with the reviewer comments below): There are currently two limitations sections – please merge them and place one in the Discussion section

Done
Reviewer 1

1 Page 5, Lines 6-8 and Lines 35-39 are basically repetitions of the same statement. Either one or
the other of these statements should be deleted.

Second duplicate statement deleted.

2 Page 6, Line 6 remove underline under 'reported'

Done

3 Page 6, Lines 47-56, Table one- "Survey of national nursing registers"… Since this was not
done, there is added benefit to including this information to the table, reported as 0/5- There this
section of the table should be deleted. The authors have provided the necessary information in
the text as to why this survey was not done.

Removed.

4 Page 7, Line 16 "Chukwu 2017". This is cited here as published in 2017? But is listed in
References as Forthcoming??...Please cite exact source and also list as Chukwu et al... If this is
the same as the reference included in the Reference list.

Thank you for highlighting the need to make this clearer. We value the opportunity to ensure that
the origins of the material are unambiguously stated and acknowledged.

The list of sources under Tables one and two have been edited to show that the data about
children’s nursing education in South Africa derives from an MPH dissertation by Uchenna
Chukwu. While this work has been accepted for publication in the SAJCH (see reference 14,
listed as ‘forthcoming’), the accepted SAJCH paper does not contain all of the data we consulted
in compiling this table. In order to be completely transparent about the origins of the data we
therefore refer to the MPH dissertation as an additional source for Tables one and two.
Added to acknowledgements: Uchenna Chukwu is acknowledged as the originator of the data relating to children’s nursing education programmes in South Africa, as credited in Tables one and two.

5 Page 13, Line 10; Limit this subheading to "Reliability and validity of data"

Done

6 Page 13, Lines 11-20; this paragraph should probably be moved to the section on Limitations under "Discussion" below.

Done

7 Page 17, Lines 6-31 "; The paragraphs should be moved up just above "Limitations" section, Since they appear to form part of the "Discussion" section

Done

8 Page 20, Reference 14 "Chukwu et al". Is this still unpublished data?? Or a manuscript in Press??

Reference 14 is correctly stated. See response to Reviewer one Comment 1 above for how we have disambiguated these two sources.