Reviewer’s report

Title: Psychological wellbeing in a resource-limited work environment: Examining levels and determinants among health workers in rural Malawi.

Version: 0 Date: 28 Mar 2019

Reviewer: Smisha Agarwal

Reviewer's report:

This is an informative paper and makes an important contribution to the literature. Please consider the following thoughts for revision:

Introduction:

- One of the factors that should also be reflected upon in the background is the well-being by the cadre of worker

Methods:

- The authors have referred the readers to the full manuscript; however, given that district*time is one of the random-effects parameters, it would be helpful to know the number of districts and the avg. no of facilities per district to contextualize that result.

Results:

- Not sure if I am interpreting the results in Table 5 correctly, but it appears that variables such as "Cadre" were modeled as continuous variables. If so, please explain. This variable should be modeled as a nominal variable. It also appears that in Table 1, there are a total of 31 clinical officers and medical assistants and 143 nurses. Perhaps, for the purpose of the multivariate analysis, the categories of clinical officers and medical assistants can be condensed?

- Please present confidence intervals for all items in Table 5. Given the small sample size, and the high level of disaggregation, as well as random effects parameters, concerns about the robustness of the results should be addressed in the discussion.

- Not certain I see the need for random effects by time, especially, given the relatively small sample size.
- Please clarify what the variable "health facility" in Table 5 is? Is that health facility in-charge (yes/no?)

- Have you considered minimizing the number of variables in the multivariate model based on importance and bivariate significance?

- I would be curious to see these results for the cadre of nurses only given that they constitute most of the sample. Your results may have higher practical relevance if outlined by type of cadre.

**Discussion:**

- If WHO-5 has not been validated in Malawi, I would highlight that as a limitation.

- It might be worth commenting briefly on satisfaction with demands of the job, interpersonal relationships and supervisory support.

- Are there any other estimates of psychological well-being (in any population) in Malawi? One thought is that while job satisfaction might be determined by factors such as demands of the job, interpersonal relationships and supervisory support; psychological well-being might be better determined by factors outside of the work environment in this context.

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Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English**

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Acceptable

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