Reviewer’s report

Title: Contemporary Issues in North-South Health Research Partnerships: Perspectives of Health Research Stakeholders in Zambia

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Reviewer: Vic Neufeld

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The topic is definitely important.

I have the following suggestions about how to strengthen the manuscript.

1. Limiting the sample to Lusaka-based researchers is problematic. It would be good to include researchers at other universities—for example, Copperbelt U. (and the long-standing research centre in Ndola)

2. The Bergen Model is useful, but not well known in the global health research field. Has it been validated in Africa?

3. There is little mention of active Zambian leadership that is doing much more than "donkey work". Examples are the Zambia Forum for Health Research (ZamFOHR)—although admittedly ZamFOHR is "quiet" just now after the passing of Dr. Kasonde. Still his paper (with Campbell) should be referenced. A more recent example is the creation of the National Health Research Forum (NHRA) of Zambia, that has published national health research priorities, and is directed by Dr. Godfrey Biemba (I hope he was one of the interviewees). Another example of strong African research leadership is the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA). Also the African Population and Health Research Centre (APHRC) based in Nairobi.

4. There are examples where research was funded by Canada's International Research Development Centre (IDRC)—an agency that explicitly funds research and capacity building in the "South". As examples, see the publications where Prof. Fastone Goma is the lead author.

5. The bibliography is missing some major and important references about "north-south" research partnership. For example the outstanding work of the Swiss Commission for Research Partnership with Developing Countries (particularly the 2012 update), and the work of the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research (that developed the "Partnership Assessment Tool").
6. The title is off-putting—cheap and in fact inaccurate. There are many examples (some mentioned above) where African researchers are providing primary leadership, including with "northern" partners.

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