Reviewer’s report

Title: How have researchers defined and used the concept of “continuity of care” for chronic conditions in the context of resource-constrained settings? A scoping review of existing literature and a proposed conceptual framework

Version: 1 Date: 06 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Mike English

Reviewer’s report:

The article makes some useful points and provides an argument for much clearer wording when talking about continuity of care and its dimensions and this should be a helpful contribution to the field and especially should draw attention to those stepping into this arena in LMIC a useful introduction.

The authors might want to explore a paper published since they submitted their manuscript that seems highly relevant to their arguments and also refers to a well-known conceptualisation of chronic care (CCM) that does not seem to be referred to in their piece:
https://gh.bmj.com/content/3/6/e001077.info

Throughout the manuscript there are a number of small grammatical, mis-sense or typographical errors that I am afraid I did not have time to highlight individually. Please can the authors check the manuscript carefully.

Specific comments:

Title - It would make more sense if the title referred to the question of how have researchers defined / characterised continuity of care.

Abstract: The sentence 'how the response to chronic health needs and the different elements of long-term model of care have been have been translated into the context of health systems and policy in low- and middle-income countries' suggests to me the paper will be about the actual translation into policy and practice while the paper is about how researchers have used CoC as a lens through which to explore various forms of health care.

Abstract: I think the methods should refer to the fact that a single investigator identified, selected and then analysed the literature. It should also be more clear about the purpose to identity concepts and themes and that any form of study was eligible whereas any results or inferences related to outcomes of CoC were not a subject of focus.

Major issue for abstract, methods and results - The authors refer to an inductive approach to looking for themes. But are these really themes in the sense often understood in qualitative
research or did the process result in the identification of different categories of research paper / topic which are then explored in more detail?

Background.

There is no clear explanation given of why a review of LMIC literature would provide for a different conceptual understanding of CoC than a similar review of high income county literature. A review (ref 8) is alluded to that encompasses the high income literature so can the authors be more clear about what the findings of this earlier review were and what their new review adds.

Methods, line 99 - which definition of LMIC was used as a criterion in the search strategy

Methods, section 5, line 121 - not at all clear what is meant here by cross-case synthesis. Are the selected papers the 'cases'?

Results, line 126 - how did they reduce the 134 articles to 55 for review, it is not clear what the criteria were for discarding references now who made these decisions

Results, Figure 1 - This is title as showing the 3 components of CoC but the figure has multiple boxes and arrows so it is not really clear to me what the 3 components are and where they are situated / how they are identified in the figure itself.

Tables 2 & 3 - I am afraid I have absolutely no idea what the horizontal, variably shaded bars are supposed to mean in these tables, are these an intended feature of the tables?

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Quality of written English
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