Reviewer’s report

Title: Integrating evidence from research into decision making for controlling endemic tropical diseases in South-East, Nigeria: Perceptions of producers and users of evidence on barriers and solutions

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Reviewer: Ijeoma Nkem Okedo-Alex

Reviewer's report:

General comments on the manuscript:
The authors should ensure proper nouns and other words well written e.g. State and state, research not Research when it doesn't start a sentence
Verbosity (wordiness) of sentences all through the text including rather long ones e.g. However, it also showed the interventions that could be used to enhance the use of evidence from research for improved decision-making, so as to strengthen the health system and achieve health goals.
Incomplete sentences especially in quotes
Attention should be paid to reference numbers and placement outside the full stop within the text and spacing between words.
There should be substantial grammatical editing.

1. TITLE:
   Appropriate for study, Only one State in Nigeria, should be better as South-East Nigeria

2. Abstract
   Line 22: Methods: Data analysis software needs to be specified
   Line 44: Results: May be better presented as user barriers, producer barriers and joint.
   Other barriers identified include weak capacity to undertake health policy and systems research (HPSR) and moribund research. (Add and as highlighted)
   ……… and revival of state research units. Correct spelling to State
   I suggest state ministry of health be written with an initial capital S as well as other places that State is used as a proper noun

3. Background:
   a. L9: In-text referencing: Should the numbers be in or outside the bracket for Vancouver reference style?
   b. A definition cum examples of ETDs and relationship to NTDs is necessary in the background for better understanding especially as authors referred mostly to malaria and NTDs
   c. Page 4, Line 34: "Evidence shows that in Africa, 34 countries are endemic to lymphatic filariasis, but Nigeria bears the highest burden, with 80 to 120 million people at risk [6,7] also, Nigeria contributes the highest burden (29 million) of schistosomiasis in SSA" Please include the year of this evidence in the text.
d. Line 43 "Nigeria, like most sub-Saharan African nations, failed to meet millennium development goal (MDG) targets for malaria and other diseases due to a multiplicity of health system-related, political and systemic challenges that contribute to increasing burden of endemic diseases and NTDs". This Statement needs to be linked to the preceding one that portrays the endemicity of some NTDs in Nigeria e.g. In addition to these, Nigeria, like most sub-Saharan African nations, failed to meet millennium development goal (MDG) targets for malaria and other diseases due to a multiplicity of health system-related, political and systemic challenges that contribute to the increasing burden of endemic diseases and NTDs. (The authors can choose which of the 'the' that best reflects their thought process)

e. Line 56: 'A major health system barrier to the effective control of ETDs is lack of evidence-informed decision making (EIDM), especially in health policy and systems research (HPSR) that is required to strengthen the health system and ensure optimal control of ETDs.' (Consider using 'which' in exchange for that)

f. Page 5 Line 2: Pang et al. stated that robust funding, generation use of research, stewardship and resources are four fundamental components of a sustainable health research system

g. Line 7: Is Pang et al the correct way of writing using the Vancouver reference style. Please create a better connect between this statement and the previous.

h. Page 6 Line 4: [20,21].It Please add a space after the numbers

i. Page 6 Line 12: What do the authors mean by 'better targeting'

j. Page 6 Line 19: Removal of evidence after research is suggested (using evidence from research evidence)

k. Page 7, Line 29: Put comma after addressed i.e. Except these barriers are addressed, strategies

l. Page 6, Line 41" Remove the one full stop after (GRIPP)

m. Please rephrase these statements below for better understanding:
   Page 6: Line 36 "This paper contributes evidence of organizational and systemic barriers to evidence-informed decision making….."
   Page 6: Line 41 "This is because, with increasing global funding for malaria and NTDs control and elimination has increased in recent years [3, 25], evidence-informed decision making so that there will be cost-effective and efficient reduction of ETDs burden are required"
The journal requires that authors state the aim of the study in the background

4. Methods
a. Study Design: Line 15; remove and before potential (as well as and potential solutions). Also this sub-section should be Study design and study setting or better split the sections
b. Page 7, L15: State of study is preferred to study State
c. Check line 37 for 'produces'
d. Page 8, line 19 , write State primary health care development agency with initial capitals as appropriate
e. Line 26: add 'the' before sector
f. Table 1: Authors are to confirm if the journal requirements for placement of tables; is within text allowed
g. Authors are to provide details on Ethics approval and consent to participate in line with journal requirements
h. More details on the data collection method required

5. Results
a. Page 11, line 12: political inference or political interference? Correct in other places
b. Table 2: Please review the table for errors in spacing and initial capitals e.g. Economist
c. Table 2: What does this 'Constitution of TWG for R' mean
d. Page 13, line 43: Perceived NOT Perceived
e. Page 14, line 26: The responsibilities of the PRS are too many to be referred as sole responsibility
f. Table 2: Authors to clarify if the solution stated under 'Promulgate legislative back up for integrating research evidence in...' is appropriate to the theme
g. Authors to check the correctness and tenses in this statement 'Producers feel that if users attached due importance to research evidence, that it may lead to appropriate allocation and release for Research in the state budget'
h. Check correctness of this sentence: However, participants reported that several data records incomplete or totally unavailable.
i. Page 14: but to a larger extent politician ultimately decide. Plural please
j. Page 14: Check correctness and also review quote which appears to be hanging: "how" and "what" policy and the decision took up. "Political interference in the health sector".
k. NOTE THAT MOST QUOTES ARE HANGING AND NOT CONVEYING THE MEANING that they should. Kindly address
l. Page 16, line 12: anecdotal not anecdotes
m. Page 16, L24: Rephrase sentence to be more grammatically correct: The following barriers to evidence-informed decision making for endemic disease control were identified at the organizational level include.
Similar errors abound in the manuscript
Another example:
The existing "top-bottom" decision-making approach that excludes relevant actors at all levels of care which, ('and' is better here) consequently, lead to poor implementation outcomes.

n. Page 16: Check correctness of statement: "Policymakers (users of evidence) do not appreciate and importance to research evidence that is why there is poor demand".

o. Page 17, L48: HRPS or HPRS?

p. Page 17: M&amp;E has been used before and was just defined in full

q. Page 18: Under political interference, authors should give a better introduction under this. The statement implies, there are more than one recommendation under political interferences

r. Page 19, line 40, remove the first 'in the state' 'Active supporting donor partners in the state supporting NTDs and malarial control in the state'

6. Discussion:
Note that the authors have discussed evidence use in general and not specifics of evidence use in
endemic disease control. Authors should arrange the discussion in line with the major findings of the study. The discussion appears disjointed and repetitive.

a. Page 20, Line 4: However, it also showed the interventions that could be used to enhance the use of evidence from research for improved decision-making, so as to strengthen the health system and achieve health goals.

b. Page 20, L14: please check correctness of the sentence below; it's too long and wordy too! The weak linkage between producers and users of evidence underscores the communication gap between the two categories of respondents that found in the study was attributed to that fact that most researches conducted are either researchers (producers of evidence) or funders driven studies

c. Page 20, L29: Uneke et al [27]………….Is this Vancouver reference style

d. Page 20, L34: in health sector…………..add 'the' before health

e. Page 20, L36: The implication is that the way priority setting process is done may be contributor of neglect to research evidence……………check correctness of this statement

f. Page 20, L36: Please discuss your findings and not that of Uneke

g. Page 20, L56: The findings imply that poor demand for research evidence reflects poor value and low priority attached on research evidence by users of evidence. Attached to NOT on

h. NOTE THAT THE AUTHORS SEEM TO BE REPEATING THE SAME IMPLICATIONS AND DEDUCTIONS IN THE FIRST PAGE OF THE DISCUSSION. KINDLY DISCUSS YOUR FINDINGS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS MORE SUCCINCTLY.

i. Line 21, L22: what do authors mean by a simple method……..use of more scientific terms that portray what is meant eg. use of evidence briefs etc.

j. Summarizing and packaging research evidence in a simple method has also been stressed (emphasized) in various studies in both Nigeria and other countries

k. Please rephrase the sentence: Page 20, L21. Too wordy and unclear

The poor capacity of health systems research evidence?? ( is this research evidence use ) among users of evidence in decision making is suggestive of poor knowledge deficiency on research capacity, translating research evidence into policy and practice as well as the wide gap between producers and users of evidence.

l. Page 20, L38: Constraint to what?

m. Page 20, L43: the major strategic issue? Please complete this sentence………

n. Page 20, L48: What is the role of intensely in the sentence. There should be 'the' before moribund

o. Page 20, L54: This could significantly affect planning of health programs and lead to inefficiency in resource allocation and poor health planning and health outcomes. What is the difference between the first and second planning?

p. Page 20, Line 58: Merge these two sentences

Deductively, this implies that there is no system in place for incorporating research evidence based decision making. Research evidence, therefore, do not appear to play a significant or any role in planning and implementation of programs for the control of malaria and other endemic diseases

q. Page 22, L12: Clarify the sentence below, did this study identify low priority or knowledge of research as stated:

Poor knowledge of research and low priority/importance attached to research evidence by users of evidence indicates the non-state budgetary allocation for health research in the study setting.
r. Page 20, L19: The general perception of capital-intensive…add the before capital
s. Address the errors in this statement,…State-supported what: Funding state research studies or state supported?? will translate to research evidence use and increase Demand for research evidence.
t. Our finding conforms to previous studies……………. conform to previous studies?? Or findings from previous ………Authors should endeavor to address the plethora of grammatical errors and wordiness in this manuscript.
u. HPSR+A evidence…………..What does this mean
v. Please rephrase: 'Another problem is that associated with poor utilization?? data collection, analysis and usability.' Please rephrase more scientifically……………..e.g., Another challenge to use of research evidence in………………
w. Page 22, L58: Existing data health facility?? Please check correctness
x. This could probably be due to inadequate human resource for health challenge…………What is the role of challenge in this sentence
y. For the highlighted, kindly add the, put numerous before incomplete, remove missing, remove the comma, services
   This is in line with the finding that reported poor quality of HMIS data which included incomplete and inconsistent numerous data records missing across the health facilities making it difficult to use these secondary data for, evaluation of programmes/interventions services and for evidence-based policy/decision-making in the study state
z. Page 22, L19: Is this implication about research or about data
aa. Page 23, L22: check correctness and tailor to poor data quality with respect to ETDs and not just planning.
   This also manifests in some users of evidence resistance to change from moving from anecdotal planning to systematic planning probably due to personal interest or lack of HPSR competence.
bb. Page 23, L46: In concordance with our finding, previous study in a similar setting………Add 'a' before previous
cc. Page 23, L60: Therefore, expansion of the producers-user research linkages to strengthen……..
dd. Page 24, Line 26: Why is Health System Research in upper case initials
e. Page 24, L29: investing on………….Investing in
ff. Page 24, L34: Check correctness of sentence………….e.g. Investing in
   countries’ health systems has been stressed globally

7. Conclusion: Note that the in line with the journal requirements, the conclusion should state clearly the main conclusions and provide an explanation of the importance and relevance of the study reported.

eg. The current decision making process for control of ETDs are not significantly influenced by research evidence. Wrong use of are
hh. Please compress the below into two short sentences
   However, it is evident that the burden of such diseases would be significantly reduced when research evidence is used for decision making, with the removal of barriers to use of the evidence using the solutions that were suggested by both producers and users of evidence. (Too Long)
   Embracing the solutions recommended by producers and users of evidence will significantly improve planning and implementation of ETDs programs as well as health systems performance. (Similar to the long sentence above and is a better summary)

8. References
   Endeavour to check all references and ensure adherence to journal requirements e.g, Reference 11 does not have the organization's name
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of limited interest

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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