Reviewer’s report

Title: Learning sites for health system governance in Kenya and South Africa: reflecting on our experience

Version: 0 Date: 18 Mar 2020

Reviewer: Chinyere Mbachu

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the manuscript, which is making a contribution to the area of health systems governance research and action learning. The manuscript provides a concise and detailed description of the processes related to the learning sites project and the abstract covers the key points and essence of the paper. I have a few comments which I believe will make the paper more reader-friendly.

Major revisions

1. In the last paragraph (Page 6 lines 96-100) the authors make an assertion that "the programme of work has fed back into policy and management discussions at higher levels of the health system" both locally and internationally……. Please include your documentary evidences as references.

2. Page 6 lines 109-111: Please simplify the description of Mitchell's Plain sub-district as was done for Kilifi and Sedibeng. Currently, the description is very difficult to follow or understand

3. There are inconsistencies in the referencing style (in-text citation) throughout the whole manuscript. For instance, in page 5 line 94 the in-text citation reads 'see also 9'. The authors should maintain consistency in their referencing style and delete all 'see also' as this is not acceptable.
4. From your experience, could you reflect on the potential and possible ways a prior history of engagement between research teams and local health managers may have influenced the research and learning sites process. This would be very useful to other researchers who may want to replicate or adapt this strategy for strengthening health systems governance (transferability).

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

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

Acceptable

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