Reviewer’s report

Title: Measuring adolescent friendly health services in India: A descriptive review of evaluations

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Reviewer: Manisha Nair

Reviewer's report:

This is an important review of the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation studies of adolescent health initiatives in India. The paper in its present form is not technically sound and coherent, but has the potential for improvement. I would recommend that the authors consult an evaluation expert to make this paper technically robust. Below are some comments and suggestions:

Objectives

The authors state that their 'study examined how these expanded efforts to promote AFHS in India have been evaluated'. Please clarify what type of evaluation were you interested in - process, impact or outcome evaluation. This is important to present the paper in a coherent and technically correct manner. Where are the main problems? Is it in process evaluation? Or is process evaluation being done, but there is no impact evaluation? What about long term outcome evaluation?

Methods

Can the authors please elaborate on the quality assessment tool that they adapted to score the evaluations? Did they adapt a standard tool? It is important to use a standard validated tool to assess the quality. The same applies to the use of a framework. The authors have used an evaluation framework - is this a standard framework? Is there a reference to this framework?

Results

Authors state that the common objectives of a majority of the evaluation reports/studies were to assess the quality of health services provided to adolescents - quality of health services is a very vague term. Please include specific components related to quality that were measured in these evaluation studies. Often the measures used are not reflective of true quality assessment. Since the authors did not start with a well-defined structure for grouping the studies into the different types of evaluation (process, impact, outcome), the results section is muddled up. The
findings are important to show the weakness in the evaluation processes adopted for the adolescent health programmes. Evaluation is a key element of programme implementation and has to run in parallel with the implementation process. Can the authors comment on the timing of the evaluation studies in relation to the implementation stage?

Clearly, the descriptive cross-sectional studies and qualitative studies cannot evaluate the impact of a programme, but may be useful in process evaluation. It is important therefore to sub-group all findings into the three main evaluation types (process, impact and outcome).

It is also important to ascertain who conducted the evaluation? Was it the implementing organisation or an independent external body? Evaluation conducted by the implementing organisation is likely to report false positive impact and is not considered reliable. Can the authors probe this further?

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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