Reviewer’s report

Title: Challenges and Opportunities towards the road of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in Nepal: a systematic review

Version: 0 Date: 09 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Francisco Estupiñan

Reviewer's report:

Dear Authors,

I have read with interest your narrative review on the challenges and opportunities for Universal Health Coverage in Nepal as my personal knowledge of the situation of the Health System in your country is very limited.

Reading your article, it seems that Nepal is in a shifting point to be able to work through the challenges in order to achieve Universal Health Coverage, led by the alignment of national policies with the goals of sustainable development proposed by the UN in the area of health. Although some of the challenges identified by you seem of a certain relevance, a decisive contribution in the form of a high-level political commitment, the government stewardship and the contributions of experts and stakeholders would be able to advance in the path towards Universal Health Coverage in Nepal in the next times.

As for my comments on the manuscript, as on its present state, it lacks some major revisions focused mostly in three areas: a) quality of written English (please, see several comments included in the description of minor issues at the end); b) methods; c) discussion; and d) figure design and conformance with PRISMA standards.

Major comments:

01-- The manuscript would greatly benefit for the copy-editing of an English native speaker (whenever possible). Please, see several comments included in the description of minor issues below).

02-- Methods section should include the search strategy for each of the search engines used in the search (including the search syntax used as supplementary materials in order to be able to reproduce the search results whenever necessary).
03-- Although some inclusion criteria are mentioned in the methodology, I would suggest commenting on the main keywords and thematic areas targeted by the search, including time periods, etc. and on the exclusion criteria specified in the PRISMA flow diagram within the text to improve the readability and the understandability of the methodology and the reproducibility of the study.

04-- Methods section should also provide an explanation on the process of revision of the articles and sources retrieved by the search, such as who conducted the review; if there was peer-review or triangulation of the sources, how was established the topic classification (as used in the result tables), what was the ruling decision for discarding an article in case of discrepancy between reviewers, etc. (For further clarification, please see the Archives of Public Health submission guidelines for Systematic Revisions available at: https://archpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/submission-guidelines/preparing-your-manuscript/systematic-review)

05-- PRISMA flow diagram design should be re-done to conform with the PRISMA standards (please see PRISMA flow diagram examples available at http://prisma-statement.org/prismastatement/flowdiagram.aspx)

You also have some tools to generate a standard PRISMA flow diagram available online at http://prisma.thetacollaborative.ca/

06-- While Discussion currently focuses on the scope, similitudes and differences of the challenges identified by the authors to the progression of the Universal Health Coverage in Nepal compared with other countries, it should also comment addressing the potential limitations of the study regarding both the results and the description of the methods used.

Minor comments:

07-- I would suggest to provide a comprehensive list of the abbreviations used in the manuscript and their meaning or at least introduce each abbreviation along with the mention of the full concept at which it is referred.

08-- I would suggest including the term "Nepal" and "Health Insurance", as keywords of the manuscript for indexing as it is included in the MeSH (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/?term=Nepal | https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/mesh/68007348)

09-- In the Background section; page 3, line 9, the sentence "Universal Health Coverage should implement through legislation (...)" should read "Universal Health Coverage should be implemented through (...)". 
10-- In the Background section; page 3, line 11, please consider substituting the sentence by "All people can use the health promotion, prevention, assistance, rehabilitation and palliative care services they need, (...)"

11-- In the Background section; page 3, line 30, please clarify in which standard definition is UHC defined as the legislative provision of universal health insurance and > 90% coverage of skill birth attendance.

12-- In the Background section; page 3, line 39, please review and correct the sentence "Germany is the first country to start UHC by sickness fund and after 2010, few countries have started as well."

13-- In the Background section; page 3, line 51, please consider introducing "between" in the sentence "There is gross inequality of health status between developing and developed countries, (...)"

14-- In the Background section; page 4, line 1, please consider rephrasing the sentence commencing by "For the high (...)" by "There are yet many challenges for delivering high-quality medical services without financial burden to the entire population."

15-- In the Background section; page 4, line 5, please consider substituting "2/3rd population" by "two-thirds of the population".

16-- In the Background section; page 4, line 9, please substitute "owing" by "due to expensive (...)"

17-- In the Background section; page 4, line 14, please correct the verb tense "(...) all these initiatives were piloted (...)"

18-- In the Background section; page 4, line 21, please correct the term "immerging diseases" by "emerging diseases".

19-- In the Background section; page 4, line 24, please correct the sentence "After the people's movement in 2006 (...)" to increase readability. I would suggest to rephrase it as "The People's Movement, in 2006, set the popular expectation of quality health services accessible to everyone and guaranteed by the Constitution."

20-- In the Background section; page 4, line 29, please consider rephrasing the sentence "Nepal is struggling (...)" to remove reiterations and improve readability.

21-- In the Background section; page 4, line 33, please provide information on WHEN it will be extended the social insurance scheme in the other 22 districts.

22-- In the Results section; page 6, line 10, please substitute the verb "to grave" by the more usual "to seize", "(...) some opportunities to seize in this time."
23-- In the Results section; page 6, line 30, please rephrase the paragraph for improving understandability and clarify the main arguments extracted from the mentioned articles challenging the achievement of UHC.

24-- In the Results section; page 6, line 35, please correct the sentence "Table 3 (...)" by "Table 3, includes information on 6 studies relating health service coverage with maternal and child health care services (...)"

25-- In the Results section, page 6, line 43, please correct the sentence "Remaining 6 studies (...)", with "The remaining 6 studies were related to health care providers having inconsistent and inadequate information technology (IT), (...)"

26-- In the Results section, page 6, line 51, final paragraph, please refer the source from which you identified all those factors as actual opportunities for the progression to UHC in Nepal.

27-- In the Discussion section, page 7, line 8 and line 9, please correct the sentence to include the articles (a, an, the) whenever necessary to improve the readability (e.g., "However, a small subsidy (...), etc.")

28-- In the Discussion section, page 7, line 12, please remove the word "the" form this sentence in "after the some years of implementation."

29-- In the Discussion section, page 7, line 20, please add a comma after "(...) groups, etc.; and none of (...)". I would suggest rephrasing the entire sentence to improve readability.

30-- In the Discussion section, page 7, line 26, I am not sure what are you trying to convey with the sentence "The UHC has emerged through different theories and values or belief systems" but seems meaningless in the context of your discussion thus I would suggest you delete or rephrase the entire sentences.

31-- In the Discussion section, page 7, line 35, please substitute "the structural challenge" by "a structural challenge".

32-- In the Discussion section, page 7, line 37, please substitute "Developed country" by "A developed country like France", and correct "also" by "ago" and other grammatical mistakes in the sentence.

33-- In the Discussion section, please discuss why the countries commented are relevant to compare with the insights found for Nepal.

34-- In the Discussion section, page 7, line 56, please correct "there is no enough" with "there is not enough".
35-- In the Discussion section, page 8, line 3, although "UHC friendly human resources for health" can be understood as that personnel promoting the adoption of UHC policies, it can be a source of confusion. I would suggest you look for another term to convey a similar meaning.

36-- Please, standardise the titles of the tables 3 and 4.

37-- In Table 2, S.N. 1, Opportunities, please review the meaning of the sentence from the original source. I would suggest it reads more accurate in the form "The social health insurance manual should be prepared after discussion with the different stakeholders."

38-- In Table 2, S.N. 5, Opportunities, please substitute the term "coops" with "cooperatives".

39-- In Table 4, S.N. 3, Challenges, please delete the first "health" as it is redundant in the sentence.

40-- In Table 4, S.N. 6, Opportunities, please substitute "hospital" by its plural "hospitals".

**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

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

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