Reviewer's report

Title: Establishing a Monitoring and Evaluation Health Workforce: Innovation for Low and Middle Income Countries

Version: 1 Date: 9 May 2013

Reviewer: Adam Ahmat

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Minor Essential Revisions

1. In the discussion part, there is still need to give more light not only on the limitations of the data obtained but also on the methods used. For example, the method Pre and Post test scores, its biggest limitation is the validity of any inferences made could be rather low. Because if a statistically significant difference in scores is detected, it would be not certain that the skills gained actually caused that difference. The score given by the respondents may not truly reflect the state of their understanding.

2. In addition, the study doesn’t say anything if the pretest and posttest are different or not. If the pretest and posttest are different, the learning gain may be due to the change in the nature of the measuring instrument. Also to appreciate the impact of the training, it is better to mention if extraneous variables (variables other than participation in the courses) were controlled or minimized. Another aspect is the interval between the pretest and posttest which seems to be quite long (one year), so an external event may affect the responses of the posttest.

3. The study used also a self-administered survey to provide information on the experiences of the respondents. The survey included open-ended questions which focused on achievements. Here also noting has been said about the limitations of such method and the data obtained. Because, there is more potential for respondents to misunderstand open-ended questions and they may answer questions without really understanding them and the researcher will never know it. In addition, they are less likely to provide detailed and thoughtful responses to open-ended questions.

4. In the discussion section, it is important to qualify certain statements that relate to cause and effect derived from some descriptive analysis data. For example, when the authors state that «One of the key lessons learned was the importance of ensuring job satisfaction, which influences staff retention.” It would be interesting to support this by strong evidence or to corroborate this with other study results obtained elsewhere.

5. Regarding the "conclusion" section, this conclusion can be drafted without seeing this paper. So, it is appropriate to review the conclusion to reflect the study. It seems to give just a rationale rather than a true conclusion of the results
obtained from the study. Some elements of this conclusion may well be fitted in the introduction or in the discussion rather than as a conclusion. The conclusion should focus first on the main findings and/or key messages arising from the findings.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'