

**Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Human resources for health at the district level in Indonesia: the smoke and mirrors of decentralization.

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over

With this letter I am submitting a revised version of the paper in which I respond to the very helpful comments from the two reviewers.

Taking the comments from Professor Utomo first.

1. Provide the main question to be addressed. These are now included at the end of the Background section as 5 bullet points and are summarized in the Abstract.
2. Provide a conceptual framework. In the Background section I have included a section on the 'decision space' approach to decentralization and have then used that to structure my discussion of the effect of decentralization on management of human resources for health at the district level in the Discussion.
3. Explanations on the contradictions.....I agree with Prof Utomo's point and have made significant revisions to both the Background section and the Discussion to deal with it. The essence is that although the government has increased control over the public sector it still has little, if any, information about the rapidly increasing private sector; the overall result is that the government actually has less information about the sector as a whole.
4. Further explorations on why.....I agree with Prof Utomo that this is a critical question. However, I feel that this is not the place to address the broader question as other factors - such as financing of the public sector at the district level, the number and nature of health facilities, health outcomes at the district level – need to be included in that discussion. Separate papers on these topics are currently being reviewed or prepared; a synthesis paper will be prepared as soon as the reviews of the individual papers are complete.
5. In addition to the 4 general points above I have also responded to other specific comments made by Prof Utomo as follows:
  - a. Tables of results (see section 3 in review). I have split what was originally Table 5 into two tables (now Tables 5 (total numbers) and 6 (provider density)). I think this makes it much easier to see the information contained there. I have also moved the detailed tables of frequencies of the various provider and employment status categories (originally tables 7, 8 and 9) to the last table (13a, b, c) as the results are adequately summarized in the new tables 5 through 12. Those interested in the details can then consult Table 13.
  - b. I have modified the title to indicate some of the emphasis of the paper.

Prof Garner's main comment was to include more quantitative information in the Abstract and I have done that.

I hope these changes are satisfactory to the editors and reviewers to whom I am most grateful for the time they have given to this process.