

Reviewer's report

Title: A strategy to improve skills in pharmaceutical supply management in East Africa: the Regional Technical Resource Collaboration for Pharmaceutical Management.

Version: 2 Date: 24 October 2008

Reviewer: Tana Wuliji

Reviewer's report:

General comments:

The authors have made excellent revisions to this paper and I would highly recommend that this paper be accepted for publication. I have some further minor comments but there are mainly editorial in nature and the paper should be ready for publication once these have been addressed.

Minor essential revisions:

1. Abstract: 1st paragraph. sentence starting with 'However, despite improved availability..' could read better. This could be rephrased to this suggested text or something similar to improve flow and connect the argument. Suggest: 'Despite improved availability, there are limited management, logistics and technical skills to appropriately procure, store and distribute medicines, maintain medicines inventories and information systems and advise patients on medicines use, thus placing constraints on the effective management of pharmaceuticals.' Also need to mention MSH in the abstract, perhaps at the end of the 1st paragraph..
2. Background: 2nd paragraph: Increased 'risk' (rather than opportunity) for inappropriate use of medicines. Not just inappropriate use but also inappropriate prescribing. Suggest alternative text for 2nd sentence: 'Inappropriate prescribing and use of medicines can be unsafe and cost-intensive and may result in wastage of resources, excessive adverse drug reactions and non-adherence to therapy'.
3. Background, page 5. Write RPM in full here.
4. Page 7. Last line. Replace 'categories' with 'cadres'.
5. Page 8. 1st line. Replace 'pharmaceuticals' with 'medicines'
6. Page 8, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence. This sentence should be rephrased to make the message clearer perhaps focusing on the problems of the system being unable to handle scale up, lack of capacity, and inappropriate practices.
7. Page 11, last paragraph. Given wider audience in journal, may need to specify that 'pre-service pharmacy curriculum' refers to pre-service education for pharmacists.

8. Table should be labelled as 'Table 1'. Delete extra comma at the end of the 4th amount in the table. Delete extra two decimal points in amount in the total row.

9. Figure 1. Capital 'M' for 'Management' in title. Activities text: HIV/AIDS (rather than HIVAIDS). Does the final point relate to pharmacist education or general pharmacy curricula?

Discretionary revisions:

1. Abstract: 1st paragraph, last sentence. Insert 'in' after the word 'partake'.

2. Abstract: 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence. Delete 'and programs'.

3. Background: 1st paragraph, last sentence. Use the same listing as in the abstract (revised sentence).

4. Background: 3rd paragraph, 3rd sentence. Add the word 'and' after the word 'transient'

5. RTRC: What is it, 1st sentence: replace 'on' with 'for' after the words 'in country capacity'.

6. Page 6, Regional coordination and technical assistance. Line six. Replace 'on' with 'with' after the words 'international experience'.

7. Page 7, Why was it formed. Line 2. Replace 'on' with 'in the' after the words 'addressing bottlenecks'. Line 6: delete 'to be discussed later'.

8. Page 9, training of HIV/AIDS pharmaceutical management. Line 4. Use capital letters for NGOs.

9. Page 11. Line 5. Insert comma after 'Health'.

10. Page 11, last paragraph. Line 4. Replace 'both the school of pharmacy' with 'both schools of pharmacy'

11. Page 13, Acknowledgements, line 3. Delete brackets around 's' in 'authors'

12. Page 15, References. Last reference. Put text 'Presented in the International Conference etc' in normal font not bold.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.