Reviewer's report

Title: Gender-based distributional skewness of the Tanzania's health workforce cadres: A cross-sectional health facility survey

Version: 2 Date: 21 December 2012

Reviewer: Neeru Gupta

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As previously mentioned, I appreciate and applaud the authors’ efforts to highlight the issue of gender in the global health workforce research agenda, particularly in the context of an African country facing acute HRH shortage. However, I am not convinced the authors have adequately addressed my earlier reservations concerning the way this manuscript is written.

Much of the literature, discussion and recommendations remain generic. The researchers do not present an innovative analysis, and offer little insight to researchers on how the methods and results can be applied in other contexts to contribute to the evidence base; nor to decision-makers and health planners on how the results can be used to support evidence-informed policies and programs. Simply echoing that gender-skewedness also exists in this particular country, and that better gender balance is needed, is insufficient to merit publication as a research study in an international scientific journal.

In addition, I still do not understand the rationale of the authors’ regression models. According to the manuscript, the survey questionnaire actually did capture data on many areas that could be highly informative to understanding the factors that may attract fewer or more women to seek and retain certain job positions (employment preferences, job satisfaction, in-service trainings). Yet such potentially rich information is incomprehensible ignored; the final choice of variables analyzed here was of minimal interest. More seriously from a statistical standpoint, the authors do not present clear lack of independence between gender and educational attainment (in fact argue these variables are inter-related). Nor between facility type and cadre (in fact argue these variables are inter-related). What added value or statistical coherence does this regression model bring, aside from distracting the reader from focusing on gender, the (supposed) issue at hand, and instead spending three-quarters of the analysis section on other issues?

In the end, I found that this article does not present an original well-defined research question, statistically innovative analysis, nor balanced discussion and conclusions focused on the topic at hand and supported by the data analyzed in the article itself. I fear the paper is of limited value as an original research study and of limited interest to a global audience to inform novel HRH policy and program options.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.