

Reviewer's report

Title: Empowering health personnel for decentralized health planning in India: an experience of the Public Health Resource Network

Version: 1 **Date:** 5 June 2008

Reviewer: Ritu Priya

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Major Compulsory Revisions

None

Minor Essential Revisions

1. This is a descriptive piece, a commentary, about the Public Health Resource Network in India. Such a perspective building – cum – hands on training with a supportive network for continued contact is an important addition to the existing public health education and training programmes.

Written by those involved in the training and coordination tasks of the network, the paper presents their rationale and approach in a clear and readable manner. The paper therefore deserves publication. However, since it does not present any analysis of or lessons from the experience of running the programme, it would be more appropriate to remove “an experience of” from the title, leaving it as ‘Empowering health personnel for decentralized health planning in India: the Public Health Resource Network’.

2. The following suggestions are for minor additions/changes in order to strengthen the paper in terms of reader-friendliness and accuracy of statements:

i) addition of brief information about what a ‘district health service’ entails in the Indian context, in terms of the population coverage and role of district functionaries in planning and implementation.

ii) Pg. 1, 3rd para: replace “absence of in-service training” with ‘limited nature of in-service training’

iii) Pg. 2, para 1: replace “One of the major gaps that comes forward” with ‘One of the major gaps that has been repeatedly identified by public health experts’

iv) Pg. 4, para 2: clarify that the team of 25 is of in-house public health functionaries.

Discretionary Revisions

Adding a section on the positive and negative lessons from the experience of running the programme, the difficulties faced and challenges met, as well as sources of support for the programme would be extremely useful for others attempting such an initiative.

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.