Reviewer's report

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

Version: 3 Date: 9 April 2013

Reviewer: Neeru Gupta

Reviewer's report:

Dear colleagues,
Thank you for your comments. I believe in the potential for sound gender analysis of health workforce in Tanzania to inform policy and program options. I believe we share the appreciation that this is an important and relevant area of research, and that you are to be commended for your efforts under challenging circumstances. Admittedly your analysis is nothing new, echoing what has already been found in many other countries and globally; nor does it seem to take better advantage of the data source described; nor offer insights into the value of this research in Tanzania’s health context, except perhaps for general advocacy. The authors admit independence of observations is needed, but then argue the lack thereof (e.g. direct interrelationship between education/cadre, education/cadre/gender, plus the issue of simultaneous influences for cadre/education/region/facility type). The regression results section allocates considerably more attention to non-gender related issues than the gender-specific results. The introduction and discussion offer a rather limited review of literature in gender and health workforce: often generalizations based on articles dated from the 1990s or earlier (e.g. references #11-15, 25, 35), ignoring the wealth of new research in most recent years or insights into Tanzania specifically. The conclusion offers nothing much “new” linked directly to the presented research results, nor their practical meaning (e.g. if the workforce is already predominantly female, how will better gender balance favouring women lead to increased numbers and better access in rural areas?). But the findings may be useful for advocacy and to spur further research. That itself may be of sufficient value for publication.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests