

## **Reviewer's report**

**Title:** What can UK healthcare professionals learn from Malawi?

**Version:** 1 **Date:** 3 September 2008

**Reviewer:** Liz Dr Grant

### **Reviewer's report:**

1. Does it address an important or timely issue?

The paper does address a key issue within developing country health care – the lessons learned from sharing experiences, the access or lack of access to global technology, the impact, (positive and negative of such technology) and the desire for global connectivity among practitioners

2. Is it well reasoned?

The paper makes interesting points and provides very useful case studies, however it lacks coherency in its overall argument which reduces its readability.

3. Is it relatively balanced, or does it make plain where the author's opinions might not represent the field as a whole?

It is balanced in opinion but it would benefit from a much more critical analysis of the Malawi health system and the shifting nature of cost share services. More comparison around the dynamics of accessing and using health care both in Malawi and Scotland would strengthen the paper

4. Is the standard of writing acceptable?

More signposting, clearer introduction stating what the paper is delivering and a pointed and structured discussion section which focuses on the concepts such as reconnecting with the core values that the authors describe. What are the issues of this reconnecting, the barriers, and the ways to overcome these barriers

I think also that a clearer analysis on patient respect and professional pride and the difficulties that the Malawi nurse Association and medical and clinical officers training services are finding should be explored

Referencing to the quiet extensive literature on health system planning and workforce development could be strengthened

Please make your report as constructive and detailed as possible in your comments so that authors have the opportunity to overcome any serious deficiencies that you find and please also divide your comments into the following categories:

- Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

- Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)

Once you have done this, there are also some questions for you to answer, including one that asks your advice on publication.

#### Reviewer's report

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Please number your comments and divide them into:

#### - Major Compulsory Revisions

The author must respond to these before a decision on publication can be reached.

Restructure introduction

Develop a discussion section for the commentary

Include a brief literature review to provide global and local context

Refer to the Development literature and the shift in development thinking.

#### - Minor Essential Revisions

The author can be trusted to make these. For example, missing labels on figures, the wrong use of a term, spelling mistakes.

#### - Discretionary Revisions

These are recommendations for improvement which the author can choose to ignore. For example clarifications, data that would be useful but not essential.

Provide a more comprehensive assessment of the Malawi health system, and the Essential Health Package, Zonal officer and District led services.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

#### **Declaration of competing interests:**

Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

- Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

I have worked for the Scottish government which funded this programme

- Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

No

- Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript? Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

No

- Do you have any other financial competing interests?

No

- Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.

No