

Reviewer's report

Title: Equity-oriented toolkit for health technology assessment and knowledge translation: application to scaling up of training and education for health workers

Version: 2 **Date:** 25 March 2009

Reviewer: Russell Gruen

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this interesting manuscript. The topic - strategies and resources to promote the efficient, fair and effective allocation of healthcare resources, including human resources - is important and relevant to the journal readership.

The manuscript describes the formation and goals of the Global Health Workforce Alliance and its technical working group, and its five recommendations on page 4 which provided a structure for the equity toolkit. It is not clear for whom these recommendations were primarily made, nor how they were made, and this should be spelled out.

The Toolkit is then described in more detail and compared to an existing needs-oriented toolkit, from which it seems to have been derived, although this is not clear and needs to be spelled out. Furthermore, there should be a clear definition of 'equity' for the reader unfamiliar with the term, and the reason for specifying an 'equity-oriented' toolkit, and its 'equity-oriented components' should be clear. Alone, the paragraphs on pages 6 &7 are too technical and need to be framed in a broad understanding of equity.

The description of the toolkit is well categorised and clear. The toolkit is, in reality, a list of resources. These are listed but don't seem to be referenced in Table 1. I suggest referencing the sources, including weblinks.

While the description details why components exist and gives general guidance about application, the reader's understanding of how to apply the toolkit would be facilitated by a worked example. Could the authors provide an actual example of its application?

I have some concerns with the figures:

I'm not clear how Fig 1 shows that "HRH bring all other elements of the health system together" as stated on p2.

Fig 2 duplicates Human Resource Development, and I'm not sure what this figure shows or the need for it in this article.

Figure 3 seems incredibly generic. Why use it?

Figure 6 is a complex figure, and will need to be reproduced large. It fulfils a

small point in the text, that gets only 1 sentence on p8. maybe the figure doesn't need to be reproduced.

Overall this is a scholarly and well-written article that directs the readership to some important resources.

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.