Review of: "Assessing the financial impact of physician self-referral on patients and how they cope with payment in Southeast Nigeria"

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Dear authors,

I appreciate the opportunity to review your manuscript. I believe that the study has merit and the report is well written. There are features of the article that need attention and revision.

1. This cross-sectional study would comply with the guideline for reporting observational studies - The Strengthening the Reporting of Observational Studies in Epidemiology (STROBE) Statement. It would be possible to provide it and state in the paper.

2. For the phenomenon of diversion of patients from the public sector to private practice where dual practice doctors have interest could result in unnecessary financial burden on patients., a qualitative or mixed methods design would present as necessary to answer questions beyond cost-effectiveness (Skivington 2021, https://www.bmj.com/content/374/bmj.n2061). The authors might consider adding this consideration while reflecting on a future study project that includes physicians' and patients' opinions.

3. Do you suggest any directions on future studies that would be worthwhile to conduct to establish a comparison of the phenomenon of diversion of patients in Nigeria and other countries? By broadening the scope of databases searched, employing an alternative (potentially more aggregative) synthesis approach, so that studies published in a wider range of settings can potentially be included.

4. Please check the spelling (e.g. see the Limitations section).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on your research.

I would like to conclude this review by noting that, on the whole, the manuscript is well written and I appreciate many points raised in the discussion section and the concluding paragraphs of the article.