

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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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This is an interesting topic to assess based on the practice currently existing in different areas. However, this is a very sensitive topic that could result in an unexpected outcome unless we are very careful. So having said this, I would like to point out my concern about this paper:

1. To start with the data collection methods, using a single interviewer as a data collector might result in interviewer bias, so how did you handle this issue?
2. Another issue is that, because this paper does not attempt to assess why DP doctors engage in self-referral practice, it is unethical to conclude that they do so solely for their own benefit.
3. Furthermore, you should also consider including non DP doctors in this study to support the reliability and acceptability of your findings.
4. Further, this study should consider the infrastructure or setup differences between private and public health facilities, which might be one of the predisposing factors to initiating DP doctors' self-referral practices. So how could you assess these impacts other than the financial ones that they possess for the patients?
5. In addition, it is obvious that getting better service will result in higher service costs, so what makes you think your study will add any new facts other than the already known facts? and what will its contribution be in order to decrease this service related cost for the patients?
6. This paper fails to consider the role of patient treatment outcome as a predisposing factor towards DP self referral practices along with the patients desire or need for self referral.
7. The references used in this paper are mostly old, need to use more up-to-date references.