Reviewer’s report

Title: Pattern and determinants of HIV research productivity in sub-Saharan Africa: bibliometric analysis of 1986 to 2005 PubMed papers

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Reviewer: Radhamany Sooryamoorthy

Reviewer’s report:

Minor Essential Revisions.

This paper is well-drafted and definitely contributes to the existing body of knowledge. However I have a few questions/suggestions.

1. This paper is a study of research productivity in sub-Saharan Africa, based on the publications records drawn from PubMed for the period of 1986-2005. But why this period? What is your rationale for the selection of this time period? This could be mentioned in the methods section.

2. Methods section, para 2. The year the author is referring to the public and private health care (% of GDP) is not given.

3. Discussion: The author says that ‘better ranking of a country the higher the quantity of its HIV research productivity.’ But there are other reasons for this that could be discussed as well.

4. Study limitations: I think this part should go with the methods section, and not where it is currently placed.

5. Conclusions: The author reveals now in the conclusion that ‘the study examined two decades of HIV literature by first authors from sub-Saharan Africa.’ This is a serious issue and a major limitation to this study. The first author may not always be the author representing the country or where the research has been carried out. This is important when co-authored papers, particularly in the field of medicine, are growing in African countries. The author should have made it clear it in the methods section.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.