Reviewer’s report

Title: Clients of sex workers in Switzerland: it makes sense to counsel and propose rapid test for HIV on the street.

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Reviewer: Alberto Matteelli

Reviewer’s report:

This is a concise report on a prospective investigation on feasibility and acceptance of HIV testing for prostitute clients in Switzerland.

The study covers an area of great interest and with very limited available evidence.

There are important and original findings of this study: clients may be stopped and counselled on the street, they are a severely under-screened population for HIV, and a quarter of them can be driven to perform a spot test. On the other side, data on HIV prevalence among surveyed clients are meaningless due to the small numbers.

Minor essential revisions

Methods: the authors should better describe the study setting: how large is the red light district in Lausanne? How much of it did the researchers cover with their survey? In addition, the authors should approximately quantify the average number of clients visiting every night the investigation area in order to show the approximate proportion of included clients over the total number of visiting clients.

 Were clients systematically stopped in their cars? How were they identified as clients?

The street interview included information on “sexually risky behaviour”. If this only means “use of condom with the sex worker” please modify the sentence, or explain what other information was collected and not presented in the tables.

A second interview was done in the bus: what was the scope of repeating the exercise? The authors specify that there were inconsistencies between responses to the two interviews: which one was presented in tables? Was the selection systematic? The authors state at the end of the discussion that clients were more trustful when responding to the nurse in the bus, but this is not really justified by any evidence: my suggestion would be to remove the sentence or provide evidence to support it.

There were 113 man who were not tested and 31 who underwent an HIV test on the spot. I would suggest making and presenting a comparison of sociodemographic characteristics in these two groups to attempt identified
factors associated to refusal of the HIV test among clients.

Discussion: the reader has the impression that anonymous HIV testing and free HIV testing are not available in Switzerland (and that these two are important strengths of the study procedures). Please clarify this point.

Table 3: the heading of the second column in not appropriate for the first row of data

**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