Reviewer's report

**Title:** HIV, STI prevalence and risk behaviours among women selling sex in Lahore, Pakistan

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 28 October 2010

**Reviewer:** Ligang Yang

**Reviewer's report:**

I read the manuscript entitled, “HIV/STI prevalence and risk factors among women selling sex in Lahore, Pakistan” with great interest since sexual health is an important issue in this region. Below are general comments and specific comments.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

**Major revisions**

1) Novelty. There have been several other studies with similar findings (Hawkes et al, STI, 2009; Bokhari et al, In J STD AIDS, 2007) so the innovation present in this study needs to be more clearly explained.

2) Benefit to STI/HIV prevention. Other studies have shown high prevalence of STI among sex workers in Pakistan, so exactly how the present study advances our knowledge of STI/HIV prevention should be clearly presented.

**SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

**Minor revisions**

**Introduction:**

1) Prior literature. Better to provide URL link to 2004 study.

2) Introduction to STI services. A more clear description of existing STI services would be important in the introduction.

3) Research goal. Please clearly state the main research goal and how this differs from the 2004 survey.

**Materials and Methods:**

1) Survey reliability. The authors mention that their survey was developed in English and pretested, but were the items formally validated?

2) Syphilis operational definition. Did this include all RPR titres or use a cutoff? This should be more clearly explained.

**Results:**

The content of table could be rearranged. I will suggest table 1 only include demographic data, table 2 include risk factors and STI HIV prevalence, thus all the data for statistical analysis will in the same table.

**Discussion:**

1) Area B prevalence. The result show the Area B had the highest prevalence of
HIV/STI. What may explain this difference in regional STI/HIV prevalence?

2) 2004 comparison. The present study results differ from the results in the same area in year 2004, the authors should discuss the disparities between the two studies.

3) Limitations. The authors need to address limitations of the present study. For example, the limitation to use RPR as screening test might miss untreated cases with a long history. The limits of self-reported behaviors might also be discussed. Differences between different typologies of sex worker were not thoroughly investigated.

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.