Reviewer’s report

Title: Motivational brief intervention for the prevention of sexually transmitted infections in travelers: a randomized controlled trial

Version: 1 Date: 22 February 2011

Reviewer: nathan ryder

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions

1. As the trial was stopped early, with only half the predefined sample size recruited a futility analysis should be done if the authors wish to state that continuing recruitment is unlikely to alter the outcome.

2. As there was a significant difference between the groups regarding reported past history of an STI, this potential confounder should be controlled for in the primary outcome analysis.

3. The method describes a “multivariate analysis for predictors of unprotected sexual intercourse”, yet table 2 report factors associated with casual partners rather than unprotected sexual intercourse. The analysis presented in table two would be better with unprotected sex as the outcome variable as described in the method.

4. The study is not robust enough to support the concluding paragraph, particularly the first sentence.

Minor essential revisions

1. The abbreviated form of 95% confidence interval is inconsistent throughout.

2. Abstract paragraph 2 line 11 – should state fewer women sex with a new partner abroad rather than unspecified sexual intercourse.

3. Introduction paragraph 4 line 2 should be “associated with”.

4. Method paragraph 2 line 4 should be travel clinic provides.

5. Method paragraph 3 line 4 should be giving too much.

6. Method paragraph 4 line 4 the terms “motivational BI” and BI are used interchangeably throughout.

7. Sample size calculation line 4 - as described above more detail is needed about the interim analysis performed.

8. Randomization line 1 and 2 – “clinical staff members”, or a “member of staff”.

9. Results paragraph 1 line 2 – 1681 travelers completed.

10. Results paragraph 2 line 3 – “the staff”.

11. Discussion paragraph 2 repeats much of the introduction.

12. Discussion paragraph 2 line 1 BI is “more effective”- than what?
13. The discussion of internal and external validity is split between paragraphs 4 and 5 making it difficult to follow. There is no mention of social desirability self-report bias
14. Discussion paragraph 4 line 5 – missing reference
15. Discussion paragraph 4 line 9 – should be “thus reducing”
16. Discussion paragraph 4 line 11 – As the study does not provide data on female condoms they shouldn’t be mentioned, or provide reference supporting the acceptance or effectiveness of promoting female condom to female travellers
17. Discussion paragraph 5 line 5 – missing s on travellers, cannot make statement that increasing sample size is unlikely to have altered outcome without further analysis
18. References – 1, 2, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 – have incorrect formatting for a variety of reasons
19. Table 1 – how was regular alcohol use defined

Discretionary revisions
1. Introduction paragraph 2 – the switch between data relating specifically to travellers and that of the general population is confusing. Line 12 – it is unclear what “this lack of effectiveness” is referring to
2. Outcomes line 1 and 3 – prevalence might be better worded as proportion; lonely might be better worded as travelling without a regular sexual partner
3. Results paragraph 7 – it is unclear what is pre-travel versus post travel data, baseline data could be groups more clearly
4. Results paragraph 8 – this is the primary analysis but it is difficult to find currently and might be better moved before the secondary analysis reported in paragraph 6
5. Results paragraph 9 line 1 – needs to specific with a new partner
6. Discussion paragraph 1 line 1 – is it travelling without a regular partner or alone?

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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