Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) types Western blot profiles as surrogate markers of HIV disease progression and predictors of vertical transmission among pregnant women in Harare, Zimbabwe

**Version:** 3  **Date:** 3 October 2010

**Reviewer:** Nitika Pant Pai

**Reviewer’s report:**

Minor essential revisions.

The essence of the paper is predicting disease progression/transmission by evaluating WB profiles. The second part of this objective is realized clearly, the first part is not. The analyses may have been limited by the small sample size. A nested case control provides optimum power to detect the association, if the controls matched to a case are 2:1 or 3:1. This is a limitation of the study and data. Other than that, I do not understand the reason for matching on sdNVP exposure—a fact that the authors could explore better in a conditional logistic regression model.

This should be explained in the discussion clearly. The other factors presented in the abstract’s conclusion haven’t been explored. Given the fact that WB continue to be expensive, generalizability of the findings in the broader African context will be limited.

Please utilize copy editing services to improve on the quality of English and clean up a few typos.

thanks!

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests