Reviewer's report

Title: Women experience a better long-term immune recovery and a better survival on HAART in Lao People's Democratic Republic

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Reviewer: Padmini Srikantiah

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This article is of interest to those studying HIV treatment outcomes in SE Sia, and provides some of the first data on outcomes among patients receiving ART in Lao. Then major findings of this study - that those with lower baseline CD4 count have less impressive CD4 reconstitution (lower CD4 trajectories), and overall poorer outcomes are worth reporting in brief, but have also been well established in multiple countries from SE Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The methods used to analyze Cd4 trajectories are reported in a complex manner, which seem to complicate the otherwise straightforward findings of the analysis. (Though a statistician should comment on the details of the statistical methods).

The fact that women have a lower mortality in comparison to men after the first 9 months, despite controlling for baseline CD4 count is interesting. Reasons for this difference are proposed in the manuscript-- and mostly relate to adherence, measured as a proxy by clinical appointment keeping. The clinical and public health implications of this should be more clearly discussed.

Would suggest that the manuscript be simplified and shortened as a brief report.

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, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.