Reviewer's report

Title: Male circumcision and the incidence and clearance of genital human papillomavirus infection in men: the HPV in men (HIM) cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 27 November 2013

Reviewer: Christopher Fairley

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to review this paper.

It is simple and well written report of a previously published major study looking at circumcision status. I have only minor comments below.

I have one major comment. I've seen the clearance data before and have always wondered whether the study was just the observation of transient HPV (not infection). The very rapid clearance in the figures and very high incidence of infection are the reason I thought this. I would very much like the authors to present the transient and persistence findings and analysis. Given it is an open access electronic paper, if these findings have not be described elsewhere in detail, it would be good to include them here. Given they have found counter intuitifve findings in relation to circumcision, and younger individuals were more likely to be circumcised, this would be interesting.

Abstract

Please provide incidence data in abstract.

Can you provide p values in the abstract- given you have lots of associations you are measuring, it is possible that some may occur by chance- and if the p values are very small this becomes less likely.

I'm not sure that the data support this statement in the conclusion of the abstract (The use of a single combined sample from the penis and scrotum for HPV DNA detection likely limited our ability to identify a true effect of MC at the distal penis.)

Intro

There must be data from the authors study on prevalence of HPV by MC status- it would be good if the findings from this are referenced in the paper.

Results

It would be very interesting to see the actual results of the transient and persistent HPV infection in the results. Given this is an open access electronic journal – where space is not an issue – I’d suggest the authors present this information.
Is the clearance for transient and persistent similar? Or is it just the magnitude of the difference that is similar?

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

CKF has received honoraria from CSL Biotherapies and Merck and research funding from CSL Biotherapies. CKF owns shares in CSL Biotherapies the manufacturer for Gardasil. JSH has received an honorarium from CSL Biotherapies and is an investigator on an Australian Research Council funded project (LP0883831) that includes CSL Biotherapies as a research partner.