Reviewer’s report

Title: Perinatal HIV transmission and the cost-effectiveness of screening at 14 weeks gestation, at the onset of labour and the rapid testing of infants.

Version: 1 Date: 13 August 2008

Reviewer: Neil Martinson

Reviewer’s report:

This is an Interesting paper with potential for having a major impact on PMTCT policy in the US Virgin Islands.

Major Essential Revisions
1. Describe US Virgin Islands in more detail: GDP per capita, total population, % female, % in reproductive age group, total fertility rate, HIV prevalence in pregnant women etc.

2. In providing a rationale for this study, need to better describe current practice ("sporadic"). How many (n and %) HIV-infected women are missed by current strategy. I think that this data may be included in the table but it is not entirely clear. A paragraph or two in the methods/background section is warranted.

3. Consider reducing the number of strategies. Discuss the options you have with experienced Obstetricians and/or Pediatricians to get a sense which of these strategies c/should be excluded. Or justify inclusion of each one.

4. Could you provide reasoning for the use of the infant EIA (Orasure) shortly after birth. Is this to get an indirect assessment of the maternal status? What is the algorithm followed for those infants found to be seropositive? Western blot in the infants or the mothers or both? Would infants detected in this way get post exposure prophylaxis?

5. Consider shortening the Background and Discussion sections and replacing those cuts with more results.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. References:
   1.1. Reduce the total number of references (84).
   1.2. Give a brief description in the methods of the few references describing US Virgin Island Data that are relied on to populate the models (especially those that may not be easily accessable to readers)
   1.3. Formatting of citations (eg: references 51, 55, 61, 62).

2. Careful editing of the text is required prior to resubmission.

3. Table 1 and Table 2 Are favourable and unfavourable the low and high values
respectively?
4. In results describe what Table 5 and Figure 2 are showing.
Discretionary Revisions
1. Reduce number of tables.

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests