Reviewer's report

Title: Acceptability of intrapartum HIV counselling and testing in Cameroon

Version: 1 Date: 9 July 2008

Reviewer: Anita Shankar

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Acceptability of intrapartum HIV counselling and testing in Cameroon

This is an interesting article about a very important issue related to maternal to infant transmission. However, the article would greatly benefit from a more in-depth review of the existing current literature and greater detail in their explanation of their findings.

- Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Table 2 and 3 should include percentages next to the numbers in the table

- Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Introduction:
There has been considerable research that has been done in Africa and elsewhere in the world related to HIV VCT for pregnant women that should be referenced (for example please see Rahangdale L, Sarnquist C, Feakins C, Nassos P, Haller B, Cohan D. J Acquir Immune Defic Syndr. 2007 Nov 1;46(3):376-8. Rapid HIV testing on labor and delivery: lessons from the field). In addition, the authors should indicate why their study is unique or if it is a 'me-too' study, should indicate why this adds to the existing literature.

Methods:
To clarify is it correct that all presenting laboring women were interviewed?

Were the specific reasons for refusing to be tested specified?

Discussion: The authors should review the papers cited to ensure there is accuracy in reporting, for example in the discussion, does the 97% acceptability in Uganda refer to consent during labor or just during any maternity services?

What type of socio-economic and cultural difference could lead to differences in perceived risk of HIV in Cameroon as compared to other places?

What is the cost of HIV testing during labor and would this be a feasible and affordable approach to recommend?
What is meant by the statement that educated and uneducated women differ in their perceived risk of HIV (please clarify).

How representative are these hospitals to that elsewhere in Cameroon?

What proportion of women in Cameroon deliver within hospitals such as those investigated in this study?

References: The literature review should be updated to include the most recent information on this subject.

Specific questions related to the manuscript:
When assessing the work, please consider the following points:
1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? - Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? - Yes
3. Are the data sound? Yes, they appear to be
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition? - Yes
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? – the discussion and conclusions should be expanded more to discuss the results found in the data
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? – no, any limitations should be discussed in the discussion
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished? Yes, but a greater effort needs to be made to review the current existing literature on the subject and incorporate this in paper.
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found? Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? Yes

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