Reviewer's report

Title: HIV and pre-neoplastic and neoplastic lesions of the cervix in South Africa: a cross-sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 22 February 2006

Reviewer: Denise Jamieson

Reviewer's report:

General

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

Overall, this paper addresses an important research topic. Although the research question is not unique or novel, the prevalence of SIL among HIV-infected women, the authors point out that information on this topic has not been reported from the Western Cape Province in South Africa.

This paper is brief and reports cross-sectional data. However, some additional information would be helpful in interpreting the data presented.

1. page 4, first 2 lines of abstract: clarify what the exposure is for the adjusted Ors presented. I assume that it is HIV status?
2. page 7: define racial categories
3. Page 7: define what is meant by series matching.
4. Clarify that IRB approval was obtained for anonymous HIV testing which I assume was not part of the original protocol? Was informed consent obtained for the overall study? For the HIV testing?
5. Throughout the presentation of results, including more information such as denominator data would be helpful. It was hard to follow the presentation of results.

There were 524 cervical cancer cases, 6% (31) of which were HIV+?
There were 1541 controls without cervical cancer, 5.7% (88) of which were HIV+? If so, I couldn’t reconcile numbers in first part of results, please clarify.

Table 1 – please include either totals or HIV-negative group so that you can see how the odds ratios were calculated. Clarify in title and results what these are odds of.

6. The abstract mentions that interaction was found but this is not adequately described in the methods or results.

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

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
**What next?:** Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I declare that I have no competing interests'