Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Introducing a multi-site program for early diagnosis of HIV infection among HIV exposed infants in Tanzania: Lessons from the first 6 months of implementation

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 1 February 2010

**Reviewer:** Marc Bulterys

**Reviewer’s report:**

The manuscript by Nuwagaba et al., entitled “Introducing a multi-site program for early diagnosis of HIV infection among exposed infants in Tanzania:...” is well-written and the analyses are appropriate. The findings are noteworthy and could be very helpful to other programs, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, as they scale up access to EID services.

Following are several comments for the authors (these are all 'minor essential revisions' under BMC policy):

1. The title of the article is too long: it can easily be shortened.

2. The time period described for EID roll-out is quite short (6 months from Oct 06 to March 07) – could this be lengthened to provide even more useful info (and larger sample size) for other EID programs just starting out?

3. A major concern is the relatively low rate of informing the HIV status – only 242 (55%) caretakers received the infant test result. I think this limitation deserves to be mentioned also in the Abstract Conclusions.

4. Background section could be shortened (2 paragraphs would suffice).

5. Note a few typo’s in the manuscript: for instance, line 5 of page 8 (Branch in Atlanta); last line of acknowledgements: PEPFAR through ....

6. The first DNA PCR testing was scheduled for 6 weeks of age (page 8) but on average they were first tested only at 4 months of age. This large discrepancy needs to be further explained. Is it perhaps because most infants are brought in relatively late for their immunization visits (at 10 and 14 weeks)?

7. Results: p-values should be reported accurately [p<0.00 is not valid]

8. The list of references includes many with incomplete information (authors may be missing or volume and page numbers, etc). Abstract numbers should also be provided for presentations at meetings (e.g., 14 and 15). National Guidelines for PMTCT should be updated (from 2004). I suggest also referring to the latest WHO guidelines document (November 2009).

9. Figure 1: please spell out the names of the neighboring countries on the map.
On Figure 3, it is hard to tell the difference between the 2 lines.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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