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

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Reviewer: Philippe Msellati

Reviewer's report:

This paper is on an early HIV diagnosis programme in exposed infants implemented in Tanzania. The topic is important as there are WHO recommendations to test as early as 6 weeks, HIV exposed infants to be able to treat with antiretrovirals HIV infected children.

The description of this early implementation of diagnosis in a region of Tanzania is important as it shows it is possible but also the limits of the programme. I think this paper should be published and I have some questions and comments.

The second paragraph of the discussion is about the very high rate of transmission of HIV in a context of nevirapine use. In fact authors should emphasize that one third of children did NOT received any prophylaxis and that 17% is the upper limit of the rate of transmission with nevirapine single dose prophylaxis (in references 20 and 21, rate of transmission is rather around 15% when using nevirapine).

The other real problem is that only 55% of parents come back, which is quite low and it should be analyzed and understood more precisely.

Authors should address in the discussion why, if I am right, more than half of mothers and 290 mothers and children did not receive any PMTCT prophylaxis in what can be considered as a pilot study.

Last as this study was achieved in June 2007, (2 years and a half ago), I do not understand why authors of this work did not achieve the study in terms of cessation of breastfeeding and definitive infant diagnosis. It would have highly improve the quality of the paper.

I am not sure the map is essential.

For the 25th reference, authors are a collective: The Kids Art link Collaboration.

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 I have no competing interests.