Reviewer's report

Title: A retrospective study of Human Immunodeficiency Virus transmission, mortality and loss to follow-up among infants in the first 18 months of life in a prevention of mother-to-child transmission programme in an urban hospital in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Version: 1 Date: 16 July 2012

Reviewer: Nyaradzai Edith Kurewa

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

This is an article of importance considering the high prevalence of HIV among women of child bearing age and that mother to child transmission can be reduced drastically due to provision of ARVs which need close monitoring and compliance.

The paper is well laid out but there is need to revisit the discussion part which is not supported by current literature. It has turned out to be a narrative interpretation of the results without really comparing it to literature and pointing out the key issues of loss to follow up.

In the results section where data is not shown; there is no need to repeat the phrase several times rather spell out the results and at the end of the paragraph state that data is not shown.

There is also need to consult the statistician on the results and their presentation e.g. for the HIV overall transmission the total then n=6. This can be rephrased after consulting.

Generally the sentences are quite long especially in the results section where it becomes difficult to follow and the discussion too where one sentence is up to or more than 3 lines!

Minor Essential Revisions

There is a reference of Giddy J... which i feel should be quoted as a number.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that i have no competing interests