Reviewer's report

Title: Caregiver-Reported Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy among HIV Infected Children in Mekelle, Ethiopia

Version: 6 Date: 4 February 2014

Reviewer: Rachel Vreeman

Reviewer's report:

MS: 5004899671061047 – “Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy among HIV Infected Children in Mekelle, Ethiopia”

(Retitled: “Caregiver-Reported Adherence to Antiretroviral Therapy among HIV Infected Children in Mekelle, Ethiopia”)

Review of Revision:

The content of this manuscript is much-improved. It now describes more accurately the methods used and reports the results in an appropriate manner. There are still some important clarifications that should be made about the study design and setting, which will allow the reader to better understand the work that was done. This manuscript could be publishable if these changes are made.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Introduction AND Methods

1. Still need to make it clear that this was a study among CAREGIVERS of children, not the children themselves. The participants were the caregivers, not the children.

2. From your comments in the response letter, it is clear that caregivers were not surveyed in the course of routine care, but in research assessments in community setting. This should be specified in the Methods as well.

Methods

3. Sample size calculated based on prevalence of non-adherence, not based on assessing factors associated with adherence

4. Adherence measurement: should include the setting in which adherence was measured, and by whom (research assistants). Again, do not describe as “patients reported”, when this is caregiver-report or proxy-report.

Results

5. Were 193 children respondents or were these caregiver respondents? Or some mixture? Must specify.

6. Medication Adherence pattern: Would not say that “83.4% of the children took
greater than 95% of total prescribed doses.” More accurate to say that 83.4% of caregivers reported that greater than 95% of total prescribed doses were taken.

7. Last paragraph of Results, some improvements but still need to say that these variables were associated with higher rates of reported adherence, rather than that the variable improved adherence.

Discussion

8. Much improved discussion about issues with adherence measurement

9. Second paragraph: “other studies from resource-limited countries have reported these factors as less adherence barriers.” This sentence is not clear. What is “less adherence barriers”?

10. Would summarize that the differences in social factors that are correlated with adherence in different settings points to two things: 1) Social factors, particularly related to the caregiver and household, are consistently influencing children’s adherence. 2) These social variables differ from place to place, emphasizing the important of understanding the specific context in which a child’s HIV care must occur.

11. Discussion paragraph 3: Odds should be reported in the Results section, not in the Discussion section.

12. The conclusions about the provider-patient relationship and the study setting seem unfounded, particularly as the supportive study setting has not been previously described. Support for adherence, counseling for families, the exact clinical location of where this study took place compared to where care is being received are the details that should be included in the Methods section describing the study setting.

13. Paragraph describing limitations is now both accurate and helpful.

Minor Essential Revisions

14. Repeated use of the term “at” in describing the analyses is incorrect (example: “at multivariable regression) Correct word would be “in.”

15. Manuscript could still benefit from English copy-editing throughout.

Discretionary Revisions

16. I would like to see the adherence questionnaire included as a supplemental appendix if possible.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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