Reviewer's report

Title: Success with antiretroviral treatment for children in Kigali, Rwanda: Experience with health center/nurse-based care

Version: 1 Date: 2 May 2008

Reviewer: Wim Van Damme

Reviewer's report:

Dear,

this manuscript is a careful and detailed report which merits publication.

I have a few suggestions for further improvement, all of which can be considered discretionary or minor revisions:

(1) "using nurses": the authors write repeatedly that "nurses were used" or that the programme "used nurses". This seems to contrast with nurses being active care givers, and not instruments of a programme. I think some nurses may find this wording slightly offensive, and I'd suggest a less instrumental and more "nurse-centred" phrasing.

(2) "disclosure": I find the use of the word "disclosure" a bit confusing, esp. on page 8. This term is mostly used when PLwHAs inform other lay persons of their status. In the paper, it seems the autors use the term also when patients are informed that they are HIV positive; or is it only when children and their caregivers disclose their status to each other?

(3) "health centre": with 28 nurses, this is a very big health centre, rather a small hospital... what's in a name? But most readers think of a health centre as a much smaller facility. What I think is important to specify is whether the nurses are the highest qualified people permanently present? or can the nurse call, or refer to, a permanently present MD or medical assistant? This makes quite a difference. We have indeed observed that the best functioning examples of task shifting to nurses occur when referral to medical assistants or MDs is very easy; so I'd suggest this is specified. Moreover, in Rwanda, "infirmiers A1" are often trained more like medical assistants in anglophone countries... some brief discussion on the type of nurses and the ease of referral or asking advice would be useful.

(4) "scored" FDC: I don't understand.

(5) p.11: transport costs ... "on indication"??? the meaning is not clear.

(6) Kaplan Meier: why don't you provide a graph?

(7) page 13 (bottom): between and 15 and ??? word missing?

(7) p. 14: ... with grade 2 and 3 with grade 3 ... = confusing

(8) in table 2: WAZ 'c': does 'c' refer to Kaplan-Meier??? not clear???

Table 2 with 3 sub-tables is quite dense and a bit confusing. Isn't it better to split it in 3 separate tables?
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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'

Wim Van Damme