Reviewer’s report

Title: The prevalence and characteristics of suicidality in HIV/AIDS as seen in an African population in Entebbe district, Uganda

Version: 2 Date: 9 April 2012

Reviewer: Jess Fiedorowicz

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1) The authors have not adequately responded to the prior concern of: “Can the authors give any impression of the proportion of PLWHA are served by these clinics or how those served by those clinics may differ from the population of PLWHA in Uganda? For instance, are there socioeconomic or geographic differences between those who are able to attend this clinics and those who donot attend? It seems conceivable that those attending these clinics would be more likely to have greater resources and less likely to be rural.”

2) The notion of seeking risk factors for risk of suicidality can be somewhat confusing in the text. Further, risk factors might lend the careless reader to assume the authors results derive from prospective study. The authors can avoid this confusion by discussing correlates of risk for suicidality. I would suggest revising the last sentence of background paragraph 1 to “…with none reporting on the correlates of suicidality.” Similarly the last sentence of the background paragraph could states “This paper examines the prevalence and correlates of suicidality…” Please correct throughout the text.

3) Some detail related to the modeling process, as described in Comment 5 in response to Reviewer 2, should be included in the statistical methods though needn’t be of the detail provided in the prior response to review.

Minor Essential Revisions:
1) Abstract, Background. Please replace “situation” with “nation.”

2) Abstract, Results: Please add multivariate models as follows: “Factors independently associated with MHS in multivariate models were female gender…”

3) Abstract, Conclusion: Please revise the final sentence to avoid extending beyond the results of the current study. Could consider “These results identify potential targets to mitigate risk through treatment of psychiatric disorders and promoting greater adaptation to living with HIV…”

4) Background, sentence 1, consider using commas instead of parentheses to delineate operational definition of suicidality.
5) Background, paragraph 1. Please reference results of cited studies as 12 month prevalence of attempted suicide.

6) Methodology, Study Design. Please reword third sentence to “To be eligible for this study, the individual must have been registered with the study HIV clinics, 18 years or older, fluent in English … and not so physically or mentally sick as to be unable to complete the interview.”

7) Methodology, Data collection tools, social factors. Please state “For this study, respondents were asked whether they had… Items were selected for inclusion in this study based on relevance to the HIV social situation in Uganda.”

8) Results, Sociodemographic risk factors. Please reword last sentence to “There were no differences in the prevalence of MHS by HIV clinic attended.”

9) Discussion, paragraph 1. The final two sentences appear more appropriate in the conclusion and can be removed from this paragraph and integrated there.

10) Discussion, paragraph 2. Please delete report of data from “ongoing PhD thesis” unless published.

11) Discussion, paragraph 2. Please alternatively state “a similar female predominance has been reported…”

12) Discussion, paragraph 3, final sentence. Please replace “the association” with “an association.”

Discretionary Revisions:
1) Backgrounds, sentence 2. Please reword.

2) Results, Study Population. Please replace “even after being repeatedly contacted by telephone” with “despite telephone reminders” to avoid suggesting study staff may have harassed those not interested in participating, if appropriate.

3) Results, Sociodemographic risk factors: Two sentences begin with the word “Majority” followed by a number and should be reworded for language usage.

4) When the authors discuss “adjusting for HIV clinic” are they referring to stratified analyses by site? Instead of stating “clinic was not an important confounder” the authors may want to note “an apparent absence of site effects.”

5) Discussion, paragraph 5. Please consider using phrase temporality rather than direction of causality, which presumes causal relations.

6) Discussion, paragraph 5. Consider replacing “dependent variable may have reduced the relevance of the correlates identified in the study.”

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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