Reviewer’s report


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Reviewer: Ned Sacktor

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The manuscript by Nakku et. el describes a high prevalence of possible HIV dementia among ambulatory adult HIV+ individuals in Uganda. The authors find an important association between possible HIV dementia and high stress and psychosocial impairment.

The study has several important limitations which should be addressed before acceptance.

1) An HIV dementia screen, the International HIV Dementia Scale (IHDS) was used to define cognitive impairment rather than a full or abbreviated neuropsychological test battery. This limitation should be explicitly noted in the discussion.

2) In addition, the cut-off of <10, was used to define neurocognitive impairment in the study. This cut-off describes HIV+ individuals at high risk for HIV dementia. A higher cut-off may be needed to describe HIV+ individuals with neurocognitive impairment of any severity (i.e. mild neurocognitive disorder and HIV dementia. The authors should state that their cut-off used describes individuals at high risk for HIV dementia, not neurocognitive impairment of any severity.

3) The authors also find no association between high risk of HIV dementia and CD4 count. The CD4 range is provided in Table 2. However the median CD4 count for all individuals in the study should be provided. Some of these HIV+ individuals were on HAART. If known, the median duration of time on HAART should also be reported. If not known, were most of the HIV+ patients on HAART for at least a year?

Overall, the study provides useful information regarding the assessment of HIV-associated cognitive impairment. The manuscript could be improved with the above revisions.

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 that I have no competing interests