Reviewer's report

Title: Psychological predictors for attendance of post-test counselling and linkage to care: the Umeed cohort study in Goa, India

Version: 2 Date: 2 May 2014

Reviewer: William Lee

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for asking me to review the paper “Psychological predictors for attendance of post-test counselling and linkage to care: the Umeed cohort study in Goa, India”, an interesting, important and well executed cohort study. I found it well written and deserving of publication. I have made a few notes below which I hope will assist with making a good paper a little better.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

None.

Minor Compulsory/Discretionary Revisions:

1) Title: There is no mention of HIV/AIDS until the last few words of the Background section of the abstract. This should be in the title, eg "Psychological predictors for attendance of post-HIV-test counselling ..."

2) Abstract: AOR I guess means 'adjusted odds ratio'? Replace the A with adjusted or leave it out please, unless there is a specific justification for doing so (eg instructions to authors or similar, which I am currently unable to access).

3) The number of participants should be in the results section of the abstract.

4) Abstract: I do not understand this sentence: "Although there was no evidence of an association between CMD and attendance of the ART Centre, post-hoc analyses appeared to show an association between symptoms of depression and anxiety and non-attendance." First, I guess the authors mean 'at' rather than 'of' (attendance of/at the ART Centre). Further, does this sentence refer to attendance for ART at the ART Centre? It seems like we are comparing case-level CMD with a more raw symptom count or similar. If this is correct, I suggest: "There was no evidence of an association between CMD caseness and attendance for ART. However, post-hoc analyses showed an association between increasing symptoms of CMD and non-attendance."

5) Background sentence 1: add 'for HIV/AIDS' at the end to orientate the reader please (if correct).

6) Does 'Umeed' mean anything, or is it an acronym? A short explanation in the Background section would be valuable.

7) Methods para 2: Please add the approx number of patients seen at the GMC ICTC annually. "The cohort was recruited from attendees of the Integrated
Counselling and Testing Centre (ICTC) at Goa Medical College (GMC), which serves both the north and south districts.

8) Methods para 4: "Basic sociodemographic data was collected from those who declined to participate." Some people are picky about 'data' being a plural (‘datum’ is the singular). (‘...data were collected...’ is supposed to be correct but does not sound too good, I acknowledge). You might choose to dodge the issue and write 'information'. (The instructions to authors might settle this)

9) It seems the GAD-7 (plus panic disorder module) has not been validated in Goa? Some justification for why this was a reasonable tool to use is necessary.

10) Similarly, the cut-offs for the GAD-7 and the panic disorder module are not justified in the text.

11) Methods para 9: 'data' was/were again.

12) Methods para 11: Grammatical problem: "[We used c] Chi-squared tests were used to compare"

13) Methods para 12: What multivariable models do is 'adjust' for certain variables. Replace 'controlling' with 'adjusting' please. The potential confounders need to be listed and justified (or at least a rationale for how they are chosen should be given). More than 'judiciously' is required here, sorry.

14) Methods para 12: Please give a rationale for the psychological exposure x HIV status interaction. If it was data-derived, the process should be described and the rationale for doing that should be given.

15) Results para 1: If the total number of attendees is known it should be stated. If it is not known, this should be stated, perhaps with an estimate.

16) Results para 5: Suggest 'adusting' rather than 'controlling’ again.

17) Results para 5: "Although the effect...". Suggest ‘association' rather than 'effect'.

18) Results para 6: This sentence could be much clearer. I suggest something like: "Among the people who tested positive for HIV and were therefore eligible for ART , bivariate analyses showed no relationships between CMD or cognitive impairment and attendance for such treatment."

19) Results para 7: Unnecessary comma in line 2. Further, could a short sentence enumerate the total number of post hoc comparisons undertaken please.

20) Discussion para 1: Suggest replace "(for those found to be seropositive....)" with "(among those found to be..."

**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.