Title: Correlates of STI-testing among vocational school students in the Netherlands

Version: 1 Date: 21 June 2010

Reviewer: Esther Sumartojo

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Abstract - Please develop an abstract for the manuscript; there was not one included in the submission.
2. Methods, Participants, para.2 - Please spell out ICT here and in Table 2 as a footnote. Explain if needed.
3. Methods, Procedure, para.1 - Please explain how students provided consent.
4. Methods, Data Analysis - Did you consider multiple comparisons? If so, please explain.
5. Discussion and Conclusion, para.4 - You state that the negatively skewed distribution may have affected the measure of severity to prevent it from predicting intention to test. Clarify this statement.
6. Discussion and Conclusion, para.7 - Expand on the limitation of the validity study. Here or in the methods section, provide additional information on how the validity study was done. Also, include a discussion of the implications of multiple comparisons on study findings.
7. Table 1 - Define or spell out "ICT". Also spell out "CBS" in footnote 2.

Minor Essential Revisions

8. Methods, Procedure, para.2 - Instead of "different cultural backgrounds", I suggest you say "a variety of cultural backgrounds" for clarity.
9. Methods, Psychosocial Constructs, para. 2 - In "Testing behavior and perceived norm of partner were both assessed...", the word "each" instead of "both" would be more clear.
10. Discussion and Conclusion, last para. - Replace "similar variances" with "similar variations" for clarity.

Discretionary Revisions

11. Methods, Participants, para. 1 - Provide information on how the convenience sample was selected.
12. Methods, Participants, para. 1 - Consider this rewording: "Of the 972 students approached for participation, 918 (94.4%) agreed to participate and of those, 778
(84.7% completed the survey."

13. Methods, Participants, para. 2 - The sample sizes for each calculation are not clear. Since space is not limited, I suggest you show this information in a table so that readers can more easily understand how you calculated the chi squares and t-tests.

14. Methods, Procedure, para. 1 - It appears that teachers supervising the students might influence their responses. Explain in more detail how supervision was done.

15. Methods, Procedure, para. 2 - How did you deal with language proficiency among the study participants? Were all participants sufficiently proficient to complete the questionnaire?

16. Results, Psychosocial Determinants, para 1. - You mention "sample scores" and "scale means". How were the scale means derived? I did not see this discussed in the methods.

17. Results, Psychosocial Determinants and Intention to Participate - I suggest a diagram to display the correlations among variables. This would also give you the opportunity to demonstrate graphically the theoretical relationships among factors in the TPB.

18. Discussion and Conclusion, para.3 - Define "outcome evaluations" and how they fit into TBP.

19. Discussion and Conclusion, para.5 - There are other relevant papers that you may want to review - at your discretion. One is our paper on correlates of HIV testing: Sumartojo, E., Lyles, C., Choi, K.H., Clark, L., Collins, C., Guenther Grey, C., Lin, L.S., Peterson, J., Remafedi, G., CITY Study Team. (2008). Prevalence and correlates of HIV testing in a multi-site sample of young men who have sex with men. AIDS Care, 20(1), 1-14. Several papers are cited in the discussion on reasons for not testing and making testing more comfortable; I suggest you see these citations, including: Mutchler, M. G. (2000). Making space for safer sex. AIDS Education and Prevention, 12(1), 1-14.

20. Discussion and Conclusion, para.6 - Define "priming strategies".

21. Discussion and Conclusion, para.7 - In order to shore up their limitation sections, authors typically mention that their cross-sectional studies can not establish causation, but it seems that you are really trying to test the usefulness of a theoretical approach in order to determine covariates of testing rather than measuring causation. You may still want to make the point about causality, but it would be good to see a cogent argument about why we aren't always looking for causality.

22. Discussion and Conclusion, para.7 - Include again a discussion of the implications of multiple comparisons.

23. Conclusion - Note that you say "that interventions" twice.

24. Conclusion - I would really like to see more about possible public health interventions in this section. A number of researchers have used Fishbein's excellent theories - see the literature on HIV for example - some cited among
your references of course. You might try to put your findings in the context of the broader literature on prevention of risk behaviors using the the TBP.

25. Table 4 - Title, I suggest you say ",,with intention to test and standardized...".

**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.