Reviewer's report

Title: Contact with HIV prevention services highest in gay and bisexual men at greatest risk: cross-sectional survey in Scotland

Version: 1 Date: 12 August 2010

Reviewer: Garrett Prestage

Reviewer's report:

This is a well-written, clear and interesting article on a topic that is potentially of much interest. The topic of the article is one that may contribute to some new and different considerations of issues around community attachment and HIV education. Nonetheless, there are some issues in this article that the authors may find useful to reconsider or at least to address more directly.

In terms of the sample, the authors eventually excluded men who did not respond to all of the current HIV prevention variables. It might be simpler to exclude those men entirely from the outset and explain why in the methods. At the same time it would be useful to explain whether the men who were excluded differed in any significant ways from the rest of the sample.

Also, regarding the sample, what was the actual proportion who identified as gay. If, as is implied, they were mainly gay-identified, and given that they were recruited through gay community sites, then it raises a question as to why you describe them as MSM rather than as gay men, or even 'mostly gay men'. The term MSM suggests a broader type of sample that is suggested here, and interestingly you actually refer to how applicable the sample is to a the broader population of gay men in the discussion, suggesting some confusion in the use of the terms and their applicability to the sample.

On page 10, para 3, you suggest that as a large proportion of men report obtaining free condoms that this sort of work should continue. This is probably true (that the work should continue), but the argument that just because a lot of men do it then that is reason for it to continue does not necessarily follow.

On page 12, para 2, you note the association between UAI and contact with HIV prevention activities, and the tension implied by this. However, it is also possible that the simple, somewhat blunt measure of UAI misses other forms of risk-reduction and this association may be somewhat more complex than appears. This is a problem that exists in many studies but you may want to comment on the issue.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.
Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests'