Reviewer's report

Title: Poor mental health and sexual risk behaviours in Uganda: A cross-sectional population-based study

Version: 1 Date: 20 December 2010

Reviewer: Gail Hawkes

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Yes
3. Are the data sound?
   I am a qualitative researcher, and therefore not fully qualified to comment on the finer statistical details, but this seems to me to give a sound overall picture of the study
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   As far as I can tell, I'm not sure what this question means.
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Generally yes. But I think that more critical comments could be made in the conclusion section, especially in relation to reverse causality. I think as well some more attention could be given to the gender issues identified in the relationship being studied
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes, they do identify the need for further study, and I think it would be important to include some subjective evidence from the participants about their experiences
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   the study is well referenced
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable?
Yes

Please make your review as constructive and detailed as possible in your comments so that authors have the opportunity to overcome any serious deficiencies that you find and please also divide your comments into the following categories:

- Discretionary Revisions (which are recommendations for improvement but which the author can choose to ignore)
  • Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

p4. Can you distinguish between depression and psychological distress in more detail?
p8, point two. It might be interesting to include the age of sexual partners, especially when you are relating this to alcohol and mental health
P 8 in terms of the consistency of condom use, was this related to numbers of sexual partners, for example, longer term relationships means less consistent condom use?
p8 a typo last paragraph replaced ‘asked at’ with ‘asked in’
p9 end of para. 2: confounding? (in?)
p13. Do you have any evidence for the claim about Ugandan women engaging in more sex when depressed? I this this comment is a bit troubling without support.
p14, second paragraph. I think this account is too thin – to many ‘mays’ here, you need to unpack these comments more, especially in relation to ‘reverse causality’.
PP`5-16 good evaluation of methods.
pp16, Conclusions This is where I would suggest you strengthen the argument for more research, especially that which will deal with the subjective experience of the subjects.
  • Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

None