Reviewers report

Title: Number of casual male sexual partners and associated factors among men who have sex with men: Results from the National HIV Behavioral Surveillance system

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Reviewer: Stefan Baral

Reviewers report:

This is an article analyzing the NHBS cycle on MSM intending on eliciting predictors of numbers of casual partners among sampled MSM. This manuscript makes a number of contributions:

1) There is a generalized epidemic among black MSM in many high income settings, though the magnitude is the highest among black MSM in the US. There is no clear understanding of the drivers of this epidemic in comparison to White and Hispanic MSM, and these data further highlight that it is not casual partners either. Others have postulated that this is secondary to lower testing rates and higher prevalence of treatable STIs

2) It characterizes predictors of increased numbers of casual partners which can help program development and resource allocation for programs targeting partner reduction among MSM.

The objectives and study design were both reasonable and the approach used appropriate. The methods used for the NHBS are well accepted and the limitations in terms of generalizability are acknowledged by the authors.

The analytic methods seem appropriate though I am not a statistician.

The authors highlight relevant data from chat rooms and posit that internet can and should be used in the delivery of prevention programs. I agree.

The tables and figures are appropriate and well done. The references are well done in that they are up to date and appropriate. Lastly, the text is well written and concise.

I believe that this is an important contribution and can find relatively little critical about this piece.

Thanks for having me involved in this review.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.