Reviewer's report

Title: Perceptions about sexual abstinence and knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention among in-school adolescents in a western Nigerian city

Version: 1 Date: 27 August 2010

Reviewer: Joanna Stewart

Reviewer's report:

Minor compulsory

1. As most of the sample are still abstinent and their ages range from 10 to 19 quoting median ages of sexual debut is not possible. One possible way to represent this important data would be to produce a graph of the cumulative proportion who are not primarily abstinent at each age (with those abstinent at ten having a denominator of all those who have reached the age of 11 and numerator those who were abstinent at 10, at 11 including all who have reached 12 with numerator still abstinent at 11 etc. This will mean changes to the abstract and discussion as well as the results.

2. The sample was actually a clustered sample as the primary sampling unit was school (and it is quite possible that responses will be more similar within school than between). Rigorously the logistic regression should have included school as a random effect. This is likely to have resulted in larger estimates of the errors. If this was not done and it is not possible to rerun the analysis adjusting for the cluster effect a statement should be included in the discussion acknowledging this limitation and therefore care in interpretation of errors and p values. Correcting for the cluster is unlikely to have a major effect on the fairly clear cut results and therefore the interpretation of the study but the limitation of the incorrect errors could mislead others using this study to plan their own.

3. P 9 last sentence in 1st paragraph – there is a typo of the final % - should be 57.4%, not 7.4%

4. Last paragraph of 'Respondents knowledge of HIV and AIDS' - no point in quoting % in score categories as the categories were formed from the data to contain 25% each – deviation from this is simply due to ties. Quoting the score that 50% are greater than makes sense but not as it is presented.

5. ‘Prevalence of primary abstinence’ section – 1st sentence – needs rewording to make clear the 12% is non abstinence, some of whom have had multiple partners (perhaps the % of these would be helpful)

6. Predictors of abstinence – There is a contradiction between the table and words – presumably the first sentence is referring to attitude rather than action?? The table (2) also need to make it clear what is being modelled – ie positive or negative attitude and it would appear the reference category is wrong either in gender, or in the other influential variables, depending on what was being modelled. As it stands the direction of being male is the same as not having a
boyfriend etc – ie if not having a partner is protective then so is being male.

7. I assume the 1st probability in the variable with multiple categories in table 2 is the overall probability – this needs to be made clear to the reader (possibly by not quoting the individual probabilities – just their OR’s)

8. Table 3 has either wrong % or numbers in the 1st line of attitude (given the p value, presumably %’s)

**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