Reviewer's report

Title: Porn video shows, local brew, and transactional sex: a risky combination for HIV infection among youth in Kisumu, Kenya

Version: 2 Date: 11 May 2011

Reviewer: Ayo Adebowale

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revision
1. Introduction
The introduction gives quite a bit of detail and a good overview of HIV and sexual behaviour among youths. However the introduction could probably be better structured and should definitely be more focused around some of the key issues, which are currently slightly “buried” in the text. Perhaps it could be structured as follows:
# What do we know about youths and sexual behaviour and what is the transmission risk for HIV in this context?
# What do we know about the local context?
# Why do we need a study on this and what are our expectations?
# What are the aims and objectives of this study?
# Why are the target variables viz-a-viz porn video shows, local brew and transactional sex selected for the study? Insights should be given on these variables.
All these should be made clear from the onset.

2. Methods
# The authors stated that they used convenience sampling to select 75 boys and 75 girls aged 15-20 years who were interviewed at their households. I don’t think this is appropriate for a cross-sectional survey. Simple scientific and probabilistic approach could have provided a better and reliable result. This is a critical part of the study design and needs more detail and clarification.
# Sample size: A justification for the chosen sample size (n=150) should be given, ideally in the form of a sample size calculation. Although, this may not appear in the final write up but will provide useful information for the reviewer. Also, the authors should justify the rationale behind the selection of 4 FGDs and 48 observations.
# The authors tried to minimize information and response bias by training the interviewers and pre-tested the instruments. However more details should be given on the actual interview process. Was this standardized? Were respondents allowed to self complete the questionnaire? or was this a closed interview (the answers may be very different, depending on the mode of completion and an
anonymous self completion questionnaire may elicit more “honest” answers).

# How did the authors recruit the in-school participants? Were they selected on sight or in their schools? This is necessary as some out of school youths can claim to be in-school. This has the tendency to distort the results when making comparison between the two groups.

# Using observation method for a study like this is quite wrong. Yes, it is agreed that data can be collected by observation, however, using the method can bias the results as individual behaviors can be affected by numerous psychosocial and bio-demographic factors other than the one been investigated. The authors should explain how they accounted for these possible confounding variables. Authors should also note that, estimating an individuals’ age by observation is very unlikely to produce good result as age is a fundamental variable in this study. The study is age specific. The authors should address this.

3. Results
These are few comments on this section;

# The section is quite descriptive. Research worldwide has gone beyond using reporting study results without p-value (statistical significant). This is necessary to justify the integrity of your major findings.

# The results should be better explained with tables so as to see the distribution. Two or more frequency tables and cross-tabulation should be included by putting them into context to provide an overarching picture.

# Report your results in percentages; avoid using statements like; over half, about a third, a few, many and so on.

# The results from the in-depth interview could be analyzed with Chi-square and other statistical models. A multivariate model is equally suggested. This will not only make the write up a novel, but will magnify its quality.

# The authors should learn on how FGDs results are interpreted using tables. For instance, assigning + or - to responses to questions in FGD guide.

# The researchers should not focus only on availability of local bars, brew dens and pono video but on number and percentages of young men and women that their patronage of these centers had influenced their decision on having sex.

Minor Comments

# A large part of the discussion repeats some of the main results. This could be shortened. Some results may be omitted. Instead more focus should be given to contextualize the meaning of the main findings within the available literature.

# There is no discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the study. This is essential, particularly in view of some of the methodological issues raised above (e.g. possible selection, observer and information bias, issues of generalisibility). The authors should try to quantify biases as much as possible and report, how they tried to minimize them and what effect they think this may have on the main results.

# The conclusion should be clearer and more targeted – i.e. what can we learn
from this study.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

'I Dr Adebowale Ayo Stephen declare that I have no competing interests'