Reviewer’s report

Title: Long term virological, immunological and mortality outcomes in a cohort of HIV-infected female sex workers treated with highly active antiretroviral therapy in Africa

Version: 1  Date: 19 September 2010

Reviewer: Brian Montague

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions
1. Need to better delineate the type of sex work in the composition of the cohort and specifically address the discrepancy between the number of sexual partners in their survey (which is low) and prior studies of the high risk group which indicated much high numbers of partners. The presumption is that they have missed the highest risk group in their cohort which, if not the case, needs to be clearly addressed and refuted by the data presented and subsequent discussion.

2. Unless cost-effectiveness and sustainability data is presented, conclusions regarding sustainability need to be dropped as they are not substantiated. All available data in the article suggests that this cohort has received a level of monitoring and intervention that may not be sustainable in most national HIV programs in sub-Saharan Africa without a commitment of additional resources based on their being a high risk group.

3. Additional information needs to be presented regarding the statistical methods chosen and the rationale for their use

Discretionary Revisions
4. Unless data on transmission events can be presented, I would suggest deemphasizing the impact on transmission in the discussion since the rate of sexual activity in your cohort is low and you have no data to refute the contention that targeting this group will have minimal impact on the spread of the epidemic.

5. If transmission risk is to remain a focus of the article, discussion of the patterns of condom use and the differential use between established partners and clients would be helpful and important.

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

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