Reviewer's report

Title: Risks, benefits and survival strategies-views from female sex workers in Savannakhet, Laos

Version: 3 Date: 18 September 2012

Reviewer: dominique ricard

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Major Compulsory Revisions:
Is there any data on the environment where these SW work. In the 100% condom programme, there is a strong emphasis on relying on the "mamasan" and other sex-workers to avoid violence, encourage the use of condoms... This angle is not reported in the article.
There is no report on HIV counselling and testing. Is it a factor to stay negative? Could the authors formulate specific recommendations to improve the implementation of activities with SWs.

Minor Essential Revisions

1 "Commercial sex work is recognized as an important route for heterosexual transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in Laos " In Laos, SW is the main route of HIV transmission.

2 Despite these efforts, between 0.8 percent and 4.2 percent of FSWs are estimated to be infected with HIV [3], and the HIV prevalence among men who have sex with men is 5.6 percent [4]. On a positive side, prevalence of HIV among SW is stable for the last 10 years.

3 There are two types of FSWs in Laos, street-based FSWs and venue-based FSWs, although there are no street-based FSWs in Savannakhet province. The street-based FSWs are women who work at night standing on the street junctions or park in cities and towns where they expect to get clients. The women find clients through their own contacts and entertain them in guesthouses or hotels. This part is confusing, no need to describe the street based-SW if there none in the studied city.
**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests