Reviewer's report

**Title:** Challenges in integrating cervical cancer screening with visual inspection methods in HIV care clinics in Cote d'Ivoire

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 19 December 2011

**Reviewer:** Lynette Denny

Reviewer's report:

Major revisions
thank you for the opportunity to review this important paper. As the authors correctly point out screening HIV positive women for cervical cancer is an important part of the care of HIV infected women. The study however suffers from a number of limitations which include:

1] it is cross-sectional

2] the VIA positivity rate of 9% is very low, particularly for a HIV positive group of women - a rate of around 20% is more likely

3] Because only 123 women who were VI positive (n = 268) underwent histological sampling, the actual performance of VIA in terms of sensitivity, specificity, PPV and NPV cannot be assessed - the detection rate does not give useful information if a policy is to be formulated as this study sheds no light on how VI actually performs and therefore the likely impact on prevention of cervical cancer and its precursors - a number of recent randomised trials (Sankaranarayan et al, Denny et al) have shown very poor performance of VIA in both HIV negative and positive women.

While using VIA to establish the awareness and infrastructure for screening is probably acceptable, using a screening test whose characteristics and true performance are not defined is potentially harmful

4] what happened to the 6 women identified with cancer - were they offered treatment?

5] Did the trial not offer participants free treatment if lesions were identified (see last line page 8)? Is this not an ethical requirement?

6] What type of educational material was offered to the women to obviate the LTFU which is considerable in this study?

Unfortunately I think this paper needs major revision prior to publication

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

Declaration of competing interests:

I have received honoraria from GlaxoSmithKline and Merck to appear on various speaker fora regarding HPV vaccination and have conducted clinical trials funded by both companies. I have no conflict of interest in reviewing this paper.