Reviewer's report

Title: Factors associated with high prevalence of HIV among Hijra (transgender) Sex Worker in Larkana, Pakistan: An analytical cross sectional study

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Reviewer: John Scott

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper and should be published.

• Major Compulsory Revisions

Given the very stark results emerging from Larkana, I think it is important that further context for this city is provided. Not being overly familiar with the region, I find myself asking how distinct is it compared to the other sites? Without this information there is a danger that the issues described appear to occur in a social vacuum and a reduced to behavioural problems, when they could well be related to broader structural factors. For example, what are health and welfare services like in Larkana compared to other sites? What is the economy of this site and how does this compare to the other sites? What are the community factors: is there a transient population, for example?

I think lack of attention to these details weakens the concluding comments, which tend to focus on individual forms of prevention, such as education and training, rather than structural forms of support, such as service provision. Indeed, the authors quote the UNAIDS frameworks three pillars, but these are not adequately addressed, especially two and three which focus on ‘partnerships’ and ‘structural frameworks’.

Some more information on the status of transsexual and transgender workers in Pakistan would have been helpful in providing a better context for the findings.

It is not clear why sex workers at this site engage in the activity at an early age: explanation(s)?

I think the authors need to add information regarding how they recruited respondents. For example, were incentives offered? Did they approach respondents of did they advertise asking that respondents contact them?

• Minor Essential Revisions

Why is it ‘surprising’ that they answered ‘no’ when asked if prevention is possible through refraining from sex. If IDUs (and engaging in unsafe practices), this actually makes sense.

The paper requires a good edit for spelling and grammatical errors.

Not sure what is meant by ‘dope sickness’.
**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, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests