Reviewer's report

Title: Systematic review of public health research on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in India with focus on provision and utilization of cascade of PMTCT services

Version: 2 Date: 21 March 2012

Reviewer: Rodrigo Cerda

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for this re-revision. The addition of a synthesis of the information as well as a critical analysis enriches the paper and makes it more useful to its audience. That said, there are opportunities for condensation of this paper, as it tends to run a bit long. Choosing the most salient points from the most salient papers in the text, as well as looking for opportunities to eliminate repetition, would make this paper tighter.

Major compulsory revisions

1) The methods section is an important part of the paper and should remain between the background and the results.

2) Table 1 is too long and should be condensed or made an appendix. Rather than using full sentences, pulling out a few key points might make this shorter. Also, there is inconsistent capitalization of the first letter e.g on Sinha et al, “to assess” is not capitalized. Table 2 is a better example of condensing results.

Minor essential revisions

3) In the Results section, under the heading “Numeric summary of uptake of services in the PMTCT cascade,” the paper mentions both uptake and drop out rates, which are complementary numbers that don’t both need to be mentioned. For example, mentioning both an uptake of 86% and drop out of 14% belies the fact that 100-86 =14, and it confuses the reader as to whether new information is being introduced. The paper should have either uptake or drop-out and trust the audience to be able to convert the numbers.

4) The last sentence in the discussion “Cost effectiveness analysis being one of the important tools for program planning and implementation allowing a richer academic discourse on this issue by attracting and training more scholars in this field might be beneficial” is a fragment or at least unclear. You could split this sentence into two: the first talking about cost-effectiveness and the second about the need to attract more scholars.

5) The first sentence of the conclusions should be written more clearly, eg In order to provide universal access… India must do a, b, and c.

Discretionary revisions
6) In paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Background, some of the specific points about uptake and gaps in the PPTCT program could be integrated into the results and discussion, respectively. Percentages of HIV-infected women identified and treated should be in the results, while pointing out the lacunae should be in the discussion.

**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 declare that I have no competing interests