Reviewer's report

Title: The Limitations of Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision and the Importance of Sustained Condom Use: A Kenyan Newspaper Analysis

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Reviewer: Oluwemimo Jayeoba

Reviewer's report:

Dear authors,

Thank you for such an interesting article. There is no doubt that media communication has a crucial role to play in HIV/AIDS prevention particularly in resource-limited settings where the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is high with low rate of male circumcision.

Here are some comments and questions which are mainly discretionary revisions and minor issues not for publication.

Abstract:

Background, paragraph 1: The acronym ‘VMCC’ was not used in the three clinical trials cited in your article but rather ‘male circumcision’ (MC). Therefore, I would suggest replacing VMMC with MC. Also, the sentence “media messages about VMMC shape popular understandings of the benefits and limitations of male circumcision.” could be reworded to avoid mentioning VMMC and MC to avoid tautology.

Keywords: Male circumcision (MC) or VMCC could be added as part of the keywords.

Background:

Paragraph 2, line 3: The statement could end with heterosexual males. The statement ‘during vaginal intercourse’ implies heterosexual sex.

Line 6: The statement ending with ‘.....heterosexual HIV transmission in men’ could probably be perceived by readers as only men are targeted through MC. There are benefits to the female sexual partners indirectly.

Line 7 and 8: The statement in this line could be written as ‘In response, the Government of Kenya launched the Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision Programme in November 2008.’ Leaving out the statement ‘...and began offering VMMC.’

Paragraph 3, line 1-3 : The sentence could be written as “VMMC is supported by several international organizations, prominent researchers, and the Kenyan government; however, debate remains concerning its promotion”. Starting and ending the sentence with VMMC seemed not necessary.
Paragraph 3, line 5 and 6: Are there literatures to back this statement up? Kindly cite at least one if possible.

Paragraph 4, line 18: I’d suggest putting all the citations ‘[15][16, 17]’ in one bracket instead of two separate ones.

Paragraph 6, last line: I was wondering why the statement ended with ‘HIV vaccination campaigns’? I’d suggest ending the statement with “…strategies of potential future HIV prevention campaigns.”

Methods:
Data analysis subsection, paragraph 1: Will readers understand what Op/Ed means?

paragraph 1, line 18-20: I suppose the H1N1 statement could be confusing to the reader. Can it be rephrased without mentioning H1N1/H1N1 vaccine since the citation is available. Any reader interested would only need to look up the article cited.

Results:
All your quotes under this section are without full-stop.

Discussion:
Paragraph 1: If the newspaper is published everyday, what is the frequency of published VMMC news for example in a week or a month? Is this feasible? This is to verify your statement that “…the limitations of VMMC, its possible negative consequences and importance of condom use is not being communicated regularly.”

Also, it would be good to know if the word “partial protection” was ever mentioned in the Daily nation newspaper.

Recommendation: Can the use of other means of media communication be suggested here?

Paragraph 6: With the recent view and data that Kenya has a higher VMMC uptake, how would you relate this with your conclusion in this paragraph?

Limitations:
In September 2011, Kenya was cited as the leading country in the uptake of VMMC in Africa according to the National AIDS Control Council. One of your limitations therefore could be the time period (2008-2010) your analysis was conducted.

Figures: Minor Essential Revisions
Figure 2: The words ‘limitations’ and ‘abstinence’ were spelt wrongly here. Also looking at the end portion of the statement placement diagram in the news...
article; I would suggest that the blue and orange bars be pulled together since the red and green bars are missing and/or not applicable.

Thank you and good luck!

Oluwemimo Jayeoba.

**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.