Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 28 March 2012

Reviewer: Rebeca Plank

Reviewer's report:

This is important information to communicate and emphasize. In general, I think this paper could be shortened considerably without losing value. Shortening it will make it more accessible and this will widen its audience.

Major compulsory revisions

1) I think the title is a bit misleading. I would invert the order, for example: "A Kenyan Newspaper Analysis of the Limitations of Voluntary Medical Male Circumcision and the Importance of Sustained Condom Use," because the paper's emphasis is on the newspaper reporting and not on the actual importance of sustained condom use after male circumcision (MC).

2) Keywords should include "circumcision"

3) This section seems out of place here, this paragraph does not flow well: "This study took place between March 28, 2007 and June 30, 2008, before the launch of the VMMC programme in Kenya, and included all print media articles published globally [22]. During this period, 219 unique articles were published, with 186 reporting that VMMC only affords partial protection against HIV and 82 reporting that individuals should use condoms [22]." This A) might belong in the methods section and B) is not clear how it is related to the final 34 articles eventually selected for analysis.

4) This belongs in the background or discussion section rather than results: "Though both Op/Ed and news articles are reviewed by editors before publication, articles written by members of the public may provide a different stance on a topic compared to those presented in traditional news articles. A study investigating reader comments in relation to the H1N1 vaccine during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic suggests that online comments are a valuable and reliable source of data to investigate individuals' understandings about health crisis events [29]."

With regard to points 3 and 4, these are part of a general "consolidation" that I think would strengthen this paper's impact.

Minor essential revisions

Although the introduction includes a lot of very important information about the
importance of media, much of it can be incorporated into the discussion. I think the introduction is too long and could be instead used to support the paper's concluding arguments.

**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'