Reviewer’s report

Title: The perceptions on male circumcision as a preventive measure against HIV infection and considerations in scaling up of the services: a qualitative study among adults in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Reviewer: Julia Samuelson

Reviewer's report:

Authors: Edith A.M Tarimo, Joel M Francis, et al

Title: The perceptions on male circumcision as a preventive measure against HIV infection and considerations in scaling up of the services: a qualitative study among adults in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Journal: BMC Public Health

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Confidential comments to editors

I am not an expert in qualitative methods or the SEM model, although I have conducted qualitative studies. It would be useful to ensure that a qualified social scientist has reviewed the article.

Reviewer's report

After some revisions, I would recommend that the study be published. Although it is a small scale study, studies such as this will better inform programmes for male circumcision for HIV prevention, and as such should be encouraged, including through publication of findings.

Major Compulsory Revisions:

Methods:
1. Settings. Describe the method of selection for the three stations
2. Sampling. Describe the method was used to recruit study informants.
3. It would be useful to describe briefly the training of the nurse interviewers instead of stating only ‘trained’ nurses.

Results:
1. informant characteristics. Please provide further information.
   a. Mean age, and range, of women and of men
   b. ‘majority’ had 4 years secondary education. Please indicate proportion in parenthesis.
   c. ‘Of these’: unclear, as written seems to mean only among those with
secondary education.
d. If possible, indicate if all (or the proportion) who are residents of Dar es Salaam. Also if they are originally from the city or elsewhere.

Discussion:
This section needs to be strengthened. It would be useful to clarify the structure of the discussion section to make it easier to follow and to better draw conclusions. Each paragraph could be clearly structured around the levels of influence, with the key concept findings then described. As it is, each paragraph seems to be a mix of points. Once this is structured more clearly, the implications section could be strengthened as well, in line with the same structure of levels of influence and possible interventions at each level.

Unclear statement:
1- Para 2, sentence 4. (contamination of scarring??)
2- Para 3, sentence 1. Refers to ‘fear of delayed scarring’ which is not referred to similarly in the results section.
a. Also, this paragraph is a mix of content ranging from age for MC, attitude and perceptions related to fears, costs, knowledge on HIV transmission which makes it difficult to follow
3- Check last sentence which seems out of questionable relevance to this study: was this men who have sex with men or heterosexual.
4- Limitations.
a. Emphasize small numbers of participants and from limited geographic area.
b. Last sentence. The findings provide in depth knowledge, in a limited, local context which is useful for programming at that level but limited for national programming.
5- Implications. In the introduction, it is stated that this study will influence better planning. It would be useful to strengthen this section and reflect further the implications at the various levels of influence as per the model and the key findings. For example, the importance of hygienic procedures and the importance of age of MC. Some of the statements go beyond the findings of the study, including the last sentence, which may be true but not clearly drawn from this study.
6- Conclusions
a. Sentence 4. Integrating MC into childhood vaccination may increase coverage of MC or vaccination – clarify. Also, this policy could have impacts on vaccination and would require more detailed considerations, so it may be better to propose further exploration of this possibility before stating it more factually.
i. Same comment in the Abstract, Conclusions, sentence 3.
b. Last sentence. Such findings are very useful to provide local contextual understanding and similar types of small scale studies in other localities would
together provide information that supports scaling up nationally.

Minor Essential revisions

Minor editing would improve the article, but it is understandable as written.

Background: Sentence 2. Could clearly state that the evidence from the three RCTs demonstrated a about a 60% reduction in risk of men acquiring HIV from women.

Para 2, Sentence 3. Rewrite, such as ‘it is emphasized that as MC only provides partial protection of male acquisition of HIV, it should not replace…..’

Sentence 4. Relevance is not clear.

Para 3. Sentence 4. Could update the number on ART (figure is old). Include a statement on the Tanzania policy/strategy on MC.

Methods:

Data analysis. The summary generated from key findings was written or oral? If so, indicate.

Table 2. Should there be categories in the third column in line with the second and third sets of item under the codes column

Table 2 is mentioned in the text before Table 1, so it would be easier to exchange and maintain the order as in the text.

Table 1. Should the title be Social ecological model (SEM)? Also should the title include levels of influence, and definitions (ie A SEM perspective: levels of influence and definitions).

Table 1. Does column 1 ‘concept’ refer to the levels of influence. If so, it would be clearer to state as such. Also, it would be useful to label each level (1, 2, 3) so it matches the description in the text.

Discretionary revisions

A number of references are dated (eg 5, 6, 7, 10, etc), or not the most significant (eg 8. The pertinence of the article would be stronger if more up to date references were used. The site www.malecircumcision.org provides access to many resources as current references and information (such as MC: global trends and determinants of prevalence, safety and acceptability, WHO and UNAIDS 2008).

Ethical considerations. ‘All informants were adults’. It would be useful to have the minimum age included.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being
published

**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.