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

Version: 2 Date: 30 May 2012

Reviewer: Shelley Lees

Reviewer's report:

This paper provides an important contribution in our understanding of the acceptability of male medical circumcision in Tanzania, especially as it is now being rolled out as an HIV prevention service. I think, however that the paper would benefit from some attention to the background, analysis and presentation of the findings.

The background would benefit from reordering and avoiding repetition of information. It would be best to introduce the statistics for HIV and MC prevalence and then talk about scaling up MMC. The section on scaling up should address that MC is only partial protection. The section on removal of penile foreskin needs to be integrated into the text as it stands alone at the moment. If microbicides are talked about then all current approaches to HIV prevention should be discussed.

A more detailed description of the participants is required at the beginning. It is acknowledged that they are strongly supportive of MC in the limitations but it might be helpful to know if they come from ethnic groups that traditionally circumcise. It might also be helpful to know if the men are circumcised. It is also important to know how they were selected to account for any bias.

It would be helpful to know how many in-depth interviews were conducted and how data saturation was realistically assessed

More detail is required on the analysis.

The tables are in the wrong order with Table 2 coming first in the text.

The findings section would benefit from editing. Much of the findings are a description of the following quote. In that case many of the points are repeated but written in different ways. For example, the section about the Holy Scriptures under individual beliefs is making the same point as the quote that ‘Even in the bible it is written that boys must be circumcised’. Instead each section needs to be a presentation of the analysis of the data and not a summary of the data.

The use of the term beliefs could be challenged. What is the difference between what participants know, perceive or believe?

The discussion and conclusion do repeat many of the findings, which could be further summarised. Also mention of partial protection should go into the introduction.
Overall, this paper could be an important contribution, once the above suggestions have been attended to.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Yes

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   It is not clear who the participants are. It is reported that they were members of a core group. Of what? But excluded if they were part of the vaccine trial. So are they part of another study or not? And how were they selected?

3. Are the data sound?
   Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   The discussion and conclusion are mainly a repetition of the findings but do support the data

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes, they acknowledge that the police were not representative of the general population

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   The title should say it is a study amongst police officers

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Some of the language is not scientific such as the use of terms such as `They sounded confused about..., speculated and imagined.

- Discretionary Revisions
- Minor Essential Revisions
- Major Compulsory Revisions

Edit the background, methods, analysis, findings and discussion sections as
suggested above.