Reviewer's report

Title: Study on behavioral characteristics of MSM who are more inclined to try high-risk sexual behaviors--A data survey based upon nine large- and medium-sized cities in China

Version: 4 Date: 2 September 2011

Reviewer: Kathryn E Muessig

Reviewer's report:

This research addresses a critical group (MSM) of interest/importance for the growing and shifting HIV epidemic in China. Using cross-sectional, self-report data, the authors have identified characteristics of possible subgroups of higher-risk MSM who could be more appropriately targeted through outreach interventions. A number of suggested revisions are outlined below.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) The entire manuscript should be copy-edited by a native English speaker for clarity and form (punctuation, grammar, style appropriate word choice). I have made some editorial suggestions for the abstract and first page (see attached document)- these type of changes should be made throughout the document.

2) What are the most significant limitations of this particular dataset (e.g. sampling) and how have you addressed them in your analysis? The rural/urban divide is a commonly raised issue for research in China. Was this assessed in the current study? In other words, did the recruited sample represent primarily urban ID permit holders or also include rural migrants?

Minor Essential Revisions

1) Please see suggestions in attached file for reformatting and relabeling Table 1.

2) The sampling frame and sample size should be made clear in the body of the manuscript under the methods section

3) In the section "Research methods", paragraph 1, please clarify whether those who answered yes to one or two of the high-risk questions were included in the "high risk" group or in the standard group. How were these questions chosen to represent "high risk"? Please provide justification/defense for the choice of these items.

4) There are currently two "conclusion" sections in the body of the text. It appears that the first one could be deleted.

5) Throughout the manuscript, does "drink wine" refer to drinking any alcoholic beverage (e.g. beer, wine, spirits)? Please clarify.

6) For references/citations please convert all to a standard form (e.g. either within or outside of punctuation marks).
Discretionary Revisions

The authors might consider naming Groups A and B as something descriptive for clarity and interpretation of their analysis.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

Statistical review: Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.