Reviewer's report

Title: The need to promote behaviour change at the cultural level: one factor explaining the limited impact of the MEMA kwa Vijana adolescent sexual health intervention in rural Tanzania. A process evaluation.

Version: 4 Date: 8 June 2012

Reviewer: Anne Buve

Reviewer's report:

This is a very well written paper. It is a powerful plea for combination prevention and behavioural change interventions. The paper is timely as a lot of attention nowadays is paid to treatment as prevention.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISIONS

1. Please update the figures on HIV worldwide in the first sentence of the paper.
2. Page 18, second paragraph, first sentence: provide reference for "Douglas".
3. Page 21, last paragraph: include also condom use.

DISCRETIONARY REVISIONS

1. Page 8-9, paragraph entitled "Sex as an important economic resource for women". I would challenge the view of the authors that sex is used by young women to acquire gifts and money to meet their personal needs. The authors give the impression that this is typical for Tanzania and other parts of Africa (page 8, last paragraph: "embedded in THIS culture..."). However, also in Europe and North America women receive gifts from their lovers or boy friends and this is/was mostly considered normal in courtship. My question is: in how far are gifts to young women in Tanzania part of the courting "game" and in how are they "hard" transactions?

2. Page 14, paragraph entitled "Restrictive norms". Restrictive norms which include lack of openness about sexuality are presented in this paragraph as facilitators of successful HIV prevention. To me this seems to be in contradiction with the recommendation of more openness in sexual matters on page 21.

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest 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'