Author's response to reviews

Title: Socio-economic Inequality and HIV in South Africa

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Response to the Associate Editor

The authors extend much appreciation for the constructive and useful comments from the editor.

"The paper is much improved but needs to be sent back to the authors for an additional revision. Please ask the authors to place their findings in the context of the current literature on HIV and socioeconomic status in Africa. This is important as their methods for measuring SES are not in common use and comparison with existing findings would assist readers in understanding the implications of this study."

1. We have given due consideration and have incorporated additional information particularly in the discussion to help contextualize our findings in the context of the current literature on HIV and socioeconomic status in Africa (see Page 11, 12, 13 text in blue colour) The following references have been added and discussed in the context of the study findings


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"...The findings showed high HIV prevalence among the poor in general and specifically among women, black African race and individuals with low educational status. The poor also felt more susceptible to HIV infection compared to those in upper SEI group. These study results are in agreement with current global thinking around the bidirectional relationship between socio-economic inequality and poor health outcome, in this case, HIV/AIDS [5,6, 11, 22, 29]. In particular, the study points to the assumption that the poor in South Africa would have dual challenges of vulnerability (particularly women) and lack of opportunities to make better life choices due to limited education and HIV/AIDS services (such as information on and testing for HIV infection). Relative economic opportunities among black South Africans, referred to as “relative wealth” by Fox (2012), on the other hand were strongly associated high HIV prevalence. Magadi [24] observed similar results in her analysis of DHS survey data from 20 countries in sub-Saharan Africa in which the urban poor were noted to have significantly higher odds of HIV infection than their urban non-poor counterparts..."

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"...In our analysis, the poor had limited access to HIV/AIDS information. A study on public communications and its role in reducing and eliminating health disparities by Viswanath(2006) indicated that those in low socioeconomic status (SES) also tend to gain less from the information flows than their counterparts of higher SES [28]. It is thus important to note that inequalities in access to mass media also follow the pattern of existing inequalities in HIV/AIDS service delivery and marginalize the poor and vulnerable. One’s economic status created synergy with gender and level of educational attainment to significantly influence HIV-related outcomes in this study. This again is in agreement with
many studies in sub-Saharan Africa which highlighted the disadvantage of being a women living among communities with high socio-economic inequality[22, 29]. “

2. In Page 10 Regression results, we have highlighted more resulted from Table 3
   “.... Those in urban informal areas (mostly urban poor) had significantly increased the odds of high HIV prevalence compared to those in urban formal areas (mostly the urban non-poor) (OR=2.74, P<0.000, Table 3). The HIV risk perception is all high among those in urban informal (urban poor) compared to urban formal (non-poor) (OR=2.34, p<0.001, Table 3). “

3. A supplementary table with some results that were initially included in the text but not referenced is also attached.