Reviewer's report

Title: What constitutes the best sex for gay and bisexual men? Implications for HIV prevention

Version: 1 Date: 14 August 2013

Reviewer: Paul Flowers

Reviewer's report:

Great paper. Wonderful to see more holistic sexual health being discussed. Although its a great start I think the paper can be much improved with additional work.

Major Compulsory

Much of the references and UK context need to be reworked for an international audience. This will get your citations up and improve REFability. So think through who your international comparators are at various levels. Should New Zealand researchers be citing you? Or Danish. So in terms of describing 'making it count' highlight relevance of it to the UK, provide cooperators for an international audience, outline what is typical or distinct (Page 5). Equally (page 17) make sure your addressing international studies not London based.

I think the paper suffers from a lack of analysis highlighting best sex descriptors with HIV risk behaviours. Is this possible? It kind of hangs above the paper as a serious elision. If it is not possible could the authors detail why not?

Could the authors provide a context for this specific sample. How does it compare to other UK and international samples - bar based, gym based, Pride based? It seems very important to have some sense of comparators and some insights into the biases associated with this study.

Could the authors provide a clearer indication of the relevance of this analysis for intervention development for gay men and other MSM. Again this should increase their citations and relevance to a wider pool of readers.

Minor Essential Revisions

Can you give some sense of the missing data for the variable? given it was the last within the questionnaire. If its possible can you also benchmark this with the international literature? As more of us do on-line research we need to be frank about levels of incomplete data.

Discretionary Revisions

I was surprised that the analytic approach was not named as framework analysis. It may improve the paper to do this clearly.
Within the discussion I would like to see a much more social scientific engagement with the data. Clear articulation of its links with theory. What does it suggest about sexual cultures of MSM? Consumerism? Patterns of aging and developmental trajectories of gay men and other MSM.

I think the discussion about biomedical prevention could be strengthened. The implications of this data and analysis are, I feel, understated. If we are moving towards an era of increased medicalisation and the elision of psychosocial and sociocultural phenomena from HIV prevention.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.