Reviewer's report

Title: Vulnerability to HIV infection among Female Drug Users in Kathmandu Valley, Nepal: a cross-sectional study.

Version: 1 Date: 2 July 2013

Reviewer: Knut Fylkesnes

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Overall comment
The authors are addressing important research questions in this study. Unfortunately, there are multiple limitations both regarding the design, analytical approaches and to the drafting of the paper. The major limitations are related to 1) the sampling approach; 2) tables needs to be cleaned up, e.g. reduce categories in Table 2; 3) The drafting of the paper, particularly the discussion. This reviewer will therefore limit the review to majors compulsory revisions:

Majors

1. Background: This would have worked much better if the authors started with a global focus (global literature on female drug users) before moving into the local setting. Also, not clear where on paragraph starts and ends.

2. Methods: The sampling approach is not precise enough to make a proper judgement on potential biases. Seems to include a “snowball” approach with no restriction in the number on respondent can recruit and without any effort to discuss the magnitude and direction of the possible biases in the prevalence estimate. The authors needs at least to describe recruitment and if restrictions on how many on respondent could recruit. This is needed as a basis for a thorough discussion on biases.

3. Results and tables: needs to be cleaned up, and multiple recoding efforts of variables are needed for the analysis (reduction of values/categories), e.g. Table 2

4. The discussion is mostly a repetition or continuation of results and thus being far from a proper discussion. The discussion must include a much more focussed paragraph on possible biases related to the sampling approach used

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: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests' below