Reviewer’s report

Title: A cross-sectional study of knowledge of partner serostatus among Peruvian men who have sex with men and transgender women: implications for HIV prevention

Version: 1 Date: 13 September 2012

Reviewer: David Dolling

Reviewer’s report:

The journal article describes the results of a secondary analysis from a 2008 Peruvian Sentinal Surveillance Survey and describes the percentage of participants and partnerships where HIV status was known and briefly describes the impact on behaviour. The article represents a useful but quite a small incremental increase in knowledge for Peru although would benefit from a few clarifications to accurately reflect the analysis that has been conducted.

Major Revisions

Firstly, the article seeks to describe how often Peruvian MSM and TW know if their sexual partners have been tested for HIV. However, the participant selection restricts those include to subjects with high risk behaviour which is linked to the outcomes being measured. For instance the high risk categorisation of “more than 5 partners in the last 6 months” could well lead to an inflated partner count (e.g. the median is 5) and "receipt of money.. in exchange for sex" could have a similar impact on the 40.9% of participants who reported this. I think that a) The behaviour which led to recruitment should be described in a supplement and b) The article should be explicit in that it only describes high-risk Peruvian MSM and TW in the title and elsewhere.

The more interesting results in this article are the description of how knowledge impacts on behaviour. However only
a) knowledge (either positive or negative) was compared with no knowledge
b) knowledge (positive) compared to knowledge (negative)

to likelihood of UAI. It seems it would be useful to compare knowledge (positive) and knowledge (negative) to unknown separately since one would expect these to have different directional impacts on likelihood of UAI which could be hidden when combined.

Minor Revisions

1347 partnerships with unknown HIV status and 230 with knowledge (page 9). Yet 1643 in total, is the rest missing data?

In Discussion Ref 30 compared to paper however different recruitment has led to very different populations. Ref 30 did not restrict participants to be at high risk.
Would it be possible to look at strategic positioning evidence where partners were known to be HIV positive? It seems like there exists active/passive data which could be explored.

The article is more than 3000 words, a brief report might be more appropriate for the level of the findings, which will be of the most interest to others involved in the Peruvian and other closely related Latino epidemics.

Not clear what the bivariate analysis used as the dependent variables - the last two sexual encounters?

The 89.9% of participants reported alcohol use is repeated on pages 8 and 9

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.