Reviewer's report

Title: Mental health and cognitive associations with seropositivity among a cohort of people coming for testing for HIV/AIDS in Goa, India

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Reviewer: Andre A Malbergier

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General:
Interesting article but needs a deep revision.
The authors should avoid using the term mental health. The study limited its scope to common mental disorders.
The authors assume that studying individuals who come for an HIV test may provide a sample of HIV infected subjects who don´t know their serostatus. This fact would permit to assess the effect of HIV on the brain without the “psychological burden” of knowing the serostatus. This is partially true as this sample of HIV positive individuals is very heterogeneous and may oversample individuals in the early stages of the disease. Therefore we may not have time to see the effect of the HIV on the brain. Moreover, individuals who come for testing may consider themselves at risk and may be suffering with this.

Abstract
Delete the reference number [1].
Conclusions are not based on the results of the research: “Our findings provide evidence to suggest that impaired cognitive functioning and depression-like symptoms may be the result of the same underlying neurological damage”. Does this research allow us to state that?

Introduction
The introduction needs to be further developed. Readers would benefit from a review of the research in this area. The authors should present more data about testing services.

Methods
Why 57 individuals who had received a seropositive result come to test themselves?
I couldn´t find any question about condom use.
The authors should use in the text the nomenclature: symptoms of depression, anxiety or panic rather than clinical diagnosis of depression, anxiety or panic respectively. The instruments used do not assess clinical diagnosis.
Results
Table 1 shows that 11 percent of the sample tested positive. On the other hand, 57 were excluded from analysis presented in Tables 2 to 5 as they had already received a positive result. The text suggests that the figure 11% in the Table 1 includes those who knew they were HIV infected. Please clarify this issue.
Low CMD prevalence (5.4%). The authors should discuss this finding as they presented 2 references that showed much higher prevalences.

Discussion
In the paragraph beginning with “However.”, the authors stated that those who were most unwell were excluded from the sample. How many were excluded?
The authors didn’t discuss the association between CMD and low cognitive performance as risk factors for HIV infection. Depression may be a risk factor for getting HIV and not only a consequence of the viral effects on the brain.

Conclusion
Conclusions should summarize the findings of the research. The authors didn’t do this. They just continued the discussion.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests