Reviewer's report

Title: The short-form condom attitudes scale: development, cross-cultural adaptation and validation amongst an at-risk population in Bangladesh

Version: 1 Date: 14 May 2012

Reviewer: Rupali Limaye

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Major Compulsory Revisions

Abstract:
1. I am unclear from the abstract how this is a mixed methods study, as it appears that surveys were administered (albeit to different populations).

2. The conclusion states that the instrument assesses factors that hinder condom use, but I thought that the study aim was to measure attitudes toward condoms, not barriers toward use.

Background
1. Have there been campaigns in Bangladesh to increase the uptake of condoms? If there have been, it would be pertinent to include any evaluations of these campaigns/programs.

2. Is incidence 9% among IDUs or is it prevalence? Either way, include incidence and prevalence for all of Bangladesh and among MARPs, if available.

3. Cite numbers 4 and 5 are relatively older references, are there more recent studies that can be included?

4. The authors state that there is significant overlap between IDUs, SWs, and clients of SWs. Can the authors provide some context about HIV risk transmission in these populations?

5. IDUs are identified by the authors as a key group for transmission risk, but there is no data about condom use among IDUs, and this should be included.

6. The statement that men have low levels of condom use with SWs is general; there needs to be some information about condom use among IDUs and SWs.

7. How are high-risk populations identified in Bangladesh? If they do include taxi drivers, migrants, etc., statistics about their incidence and prevalence should be included.

8. Is there some data that show how often taxi drivers, truckers, migrants, fishermen, etc., visit a SW?

9. Are the authors arguing that specific attitudes, and NOT general attitudes, predict behaviors? This is a bit unclear.

10. I think what is missing here is some context about which factors have the
potential to influence behavior change. There isn't a clear explanation as to why the authors chose to focus on attitudes – where is the argument that attitudes are important/integral for behavior change to occur? Have there been other studies that have demonstrated this in condom use behavior globally or more specifically in Bangladesh/the region?

11. If there have been several scales besides the ATCS, why did the authors pick it for this analysis?

12. What is meant by functional attitude?

Methods

1. It is not clear why the survey was administered to restaurant workers. Are they also a MARP? How are they comparable to taxi drivers?

2. There needs to be more detail about how the participants were recruited/approached. What were the rates of acceptance? Where were they approached? Was the sampling done systematically? What can the authors say about generalizability about their sample in relation to other taxi drivers/restaurant workers?

3. What were participants compensated for being in the study? Could this have influenced agreement to be in the study?

4. Why were the measures structured along the three dimensions noted?

5. Why were 6 of the items from the original scale included? How were these chosen for inclusion?

6. Were 10 items included or were 11 items included?

Results

1. For table 1, I am not sure if all of the variables that are currently included need to be included…

2. The authors separated the taxi drivers and restaurant workers in table 1, but in table 2, they are combined. Were there differences in attitudes by group?

I think a mean score of 21.45 is quite close to being indifferent about condom use, but the authors state that the participants had negative attitudes toward condom use…

3. For table 5, can the authors comment on those that were retested to those that were not retested?

4. How was the questionnaire structured – were participants asked about their use first and then their attitudes later on in the instrument?

Discussion

1. The authors state that individual instrument norm and attitude is important for behavior change. Both of these terms need to be explained and referenced, and should be included in the background.

2. There needs to be some discussion about the implications of these results. How will this scale help program developers? Researchers?
General: This manuscript needs a copy edit. There are verbs missing in places and there are grammar mistakes.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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.