Reviewer's report

**Title:** "You are wasting our drugs": Health Service Barriers to HIV Treatment for Sex Workers in Zimbabwe

**Version:** 2 **Date:** 14 May 2013

**Reviewer:** Maria Roura

**Reviewer's report:**

This is a concise and clearly written paper investigating reasons for poor ART referral uptake and adherence to treatment amongst sex workers in Zimbabwe. The paper addresses the needs of a population which in spite of been disproportionately affected by HIV appear to be overlooked in the context of generalised epidemics and highlights how stigma persists as a barrier to successful HIV programming in this population. Through a qualitative investigation of perceived challenges specifically related to being a sex worker, the authors draw some practical recommendations for a short term improvement of programs targeted at sex workers while highlighting the need to evolve towards more integrative approaches where the needs of sex workers would be adequately covered by national services addressed at the general population. The paper is well written, well justified and well referenced. I recommend the publication of this manuscript, subject to the minor amendments below.

**Discretionary revisions**

**Methods**

Data is drawn from three focus groups and unlike many other qualitative studies no complementary individual interviews were conducted. It would be useful to explicitly state why a group format was preferred and what measures were taken to ensure no involuntary disclosure of the HIV status of participants occurred: taking part in the activity would imply disclosing HIV status to the rest of group participants as the activity was specifically addressed at HIV+ individuals. While group activities can potentially yield a lot of information, it would be useful to indicate what were the criteria used to determine the number of activities conducted.

**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.

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