Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards Voluntary Counseling and Testing among University Students in North West Ethiopia: a cross sectional study.

Version: 2 Date: 19 February 2013

Reviewer: Tarja Suominen

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The article is of valuable topic however I like to make several comments of the manuscript in its present form to improve it.

General

It would be helpful to write clear research questions. Now the purpose is structured based on 3 areas, like knowledge, attitudes and practice. You should base the research questions also on these 3. Now you have divided knowledge to general knowledge and related to VCT practices. This is not logic. Please structure on 3 and structure the instruments, results, discussion phase also based on the same structure to have logic text. In knowledge you just have the subareas also, general knowledge and knowledge of VCT.

Abstract

The sentence starting About 89.3% … is not clear. Furthermore, what do you mean by outcome variables is not clear, because you are not using this concepts in the other parts of the manuscript. Also, from the abstract is not clear what you mean with these stigma and discrimination, because you are not writing later on how they are measured. In order to understand the results you should write/list all the background questions asked.

Background

The statistical numbers are from the year 2008, just wondering whether there are not newer ones.

Methods

Clear research questions needed. No need to say the name of the university, anonymity. University being the oldest one, no need to write. How did you select the campus, the information should be added, was that random or purposeful. Who and how the campus registrar was received, which kind of permissions were received for that. Did the researchers themselves receive the home addresses of the students or where there some contact person at the university campus.

How the data collection really happened is unclear. How the written consent was received? Was it sent before or at the same time with the questionnaire to the students? What changes were made based on the pilot is not informed.
All asked background factors should be listed in order to understand the results. Avoid the writing style HIV/AIDS, not recommended any more.

Chr. alfa values are given to knowledge and attitudes parts of the questionnaire, however limitations and validity and reliability of the instrument and the study is not discussed in other ways. So, for example where the researchers satisfied later on how they measured e.g. practice. Ethical issues should be discussed more, e.g. the relationships of the researchers to the university and students and how written consent was received.

Results

The most problematic issue in this article is the statistical analysis and the results based on it. For example if some received in knowledge “area” the result 4.86, she had good knowledge, but if he received 4.84 he had poor knowledge, the mean was 4.85 and the division of the respondents were made in two groups based on the mean. Then the analysis continued with looking these groups based on some background factors. So, what does these kind of results mean for practice?

Conclusion

This is now more like repetition of the results.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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

Declaration of competing interests:

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