Reviewer’s report

Title: Men having sex with men serosorting with casual partners: who, how much, and what risk factors in Switzerland, 2007-2009

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2013

Reviewer: H. Fisher Raymond

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Review
This paper attempts to describe serosorting and the risk of HIV transmission among serosorters from two cross sectional surveys of MSM.

A number of issues reduce my enthusiasm for this paper.
1. Pooling the two survey years’ data appears to be problematic without accounting for duplication. The analysis approach presented does not appear to acknowledge this issue nor is this issue adequately addressed in the limitations.
2. The analysis overall could be more parsimonious. The extent to which the authors go to rationalize aggregating two years of data outweighs the actual analysis of the behavior of interest.
3. Defining possible risk as not having had an HIV test in the past 12 months is overly simplistic. Men who have not had an HIV test in the past 12 months may very correctly know that they are HIV negative. The definition should take into account testing AND sexual behaviors to determine how likely the person is still negative or not.

Minor issues
1. The authors need to explain more about the overall survey, what a valid questionnaire is etc.
2. Figure 1 is results and thus should be presented in results not in the methods.
3. The serosorting question appears to be imprecise. Is the translation presented in the MS verbatim or paraphrased? It would be better if asking HIV status was first and then the part about “then did you practice UAI because you thought it would help you avoid HIV infection”
4. The paper needs a thorough editing for English usage and grammar.
5. The font style and size made reading this MS difficult. Please use a 12 point common font such as times new roman.
6. The background section needs improvement. This sentence makes little sense “…the proportion of overall new HIV positive tests among MSM was still increasing to reach about 47% of all declared infections.” Does this mean that the proportion of new HIV positive tests in the case reporting system is about 47%
MSM as opposed to other risk groups? Couldn’t this be due to better HIV testing strategies focused on MSM as opposed to increasing HIV incidence among MSM? The previous sentence is also confusing. Do you measure recent infections with lab based methods? That is how do you know that the infections are diagnosed within 6 months of the infection occurring? Taken at face value lower “recent” infections and increasing proportion of cases being among MSM suggests to me that its an artifact of better directed testing efforts and not a resurgence of the HIV epidemic among Swiss MSM.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

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

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I have no competing interests