Reviewer's report

Title: Immigrant women living with HIV in Spain: A qualitative approach to encourage medical follow-up

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Reviewer: Susan Seibold-Simpson

Reviewer's report:

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Research article

Immigrant women living with HIV in Spain: A qualitative approach to encourage medical follow-up Anne Guionnet, Barbara Navaza, Belén Pizarro de la Fuente, María Jesús Pérez-Elías, Fernando Dronda, Rogelio López-Vélez and José A Pérez Molina BMC Public Health

When assessing the work, please consider the following points:

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
   Fairly well
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   No
3. Are the data sound?
   Unsure
4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   No
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Fair
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Could be improved
7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Not applicable
8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes
9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Mostly.
Manuscript is substantially improved.
Further content improvements could be made, however.

Major Compulsory Revisions

Background:
General comment:

1. Background section would be stronger if the authors identified what is not known, or the gaps associated with what is known - build a stronger case for why this research needed to be done - could be accomplished with just a few additional sentences.

2. p. 4: How did cultural conceptions affect care?

Sample:
3. What do the authors mean by "predetermined" sampling method? I thought the switch was to be made to purposive sampling. It would also be helpful to include one or two sentences about why this strategy was chose. Remove first sentence from "sample" section to outside of sampling, as this is not part of sampling process.

4. p. 4: Among immigrant women

5. p. 5: Among native women or among all patients including immigrant and native women.

6. Move these sentences to earlier in paragraph, then move to initial screen and contact by health care provider. Move sentence regarding reachable patients to next section - data collection. Indicate why there was the decision to include heterogeneity. Then discuss no incentive and IRB approval. Why did the authors include women who had continued treatment? Need more detail about how sample inclusion criteria were chosen.

Analysis
7. p. 5: Consider changing to "Grounded theory methodology was used to . . ."

8. Indicate which school was used (e.g., Strauss and Glaser).

9. Why did they choose this method? Grounded theory usually results in a model as it describes a process - this study doesn't appear to do that - it is more about a descriptive qualitative study using the grounded theory approach to analysis. More information regarding the methodology is needed. What happened if there were disagreements, for example. How did they move from open to axial to selective? This is an essential piece of presenting qualitative research.

10. Additionally, the description of triangulation remains insufficient.

Data Collection:
11. Consider changing "interviews" to data collection. Add sentence about being contacted by researchers after initial screen by health care provider.

12. Initial sentence is more of a fragment that full sentence - please expand.
13. p. 6: Which of the 6 authors participated in the triangulation? Add initials.
14. p. 6: until there were no new… It should be information or findings, not data
15. p. 6: last sentence is awkward and needs to be reconsidered.

Results
16. Add subheadings of demographics and themes. It should be made clearer that within each theme are the barriers and facilitators.
17. It is always helpful to include specific quotes that elucidate the theme. Since these are captured in table 2, this should be noted in the narrative. I personally find this somewhat awkward, however. I think it would be helpful to separate what went into the information pamphlet from the findings. It might make more sense to put these in a table and have the quotes in the narrative. It depends on where the emphasis for the manuscript should be - interpretation of the data into separate and unique themes or the implications for health care providers.
18. p. 6: "These barriers and facilitators had more influence on immigrant women than
19. on Spanish women." Consider provider greater specificity, for example: Certain barriers and facilitators appeared to have greater influence on immigrant versus native women (table 2).
20. p. 6 "The main findings - this sentence/information" would be more appropriate in the discussion section.
21. p. 7 Doctor-patient relationship needs a stronger opening sentence. For example, "The quality of the doctor patient relationship greatly impacted the likelihood of adherence to treatment." "An effective relationship was described as…"
22. p. 8: Who "had" not who have.
23. Relationship between body and HIV - please start with how this theme was developed, not what the theme should mean. I recommend interpretation after theme development.
25. p. 9 - should it be in elderly care OR maintenance of homes…?
26. Emotional Support Received continues to be problematic. A stronger link needs to be established as to how emotional support is reduced when patients choose not to disclose their status. Also there is overlap between disclosure and social representations of AIDS/stigma: this needs to be addressed.
27. Trust in the biomedical system is imprecise. It is hard to ascertain how this is different from the social representation of AIDS.

Discussion
28. The discussion section would benefit from having subheadings.
29. I'm not sure that figure 2 is necessary. It is unclear what it adds beyond figure
1.

30. p. 18, para 3 beginning "As has been.." : sentence one is unclear. Sentence 2 is unclear.

31. It is helpful to have the discussion follow the sequence of the results. The discussion is a little difficult to follow.

32. p. 18: The somatization link could be made clearer in the results section - it seems somewhat abrupt being brought up in the discussion.

33. p. 19: I'm not sure palliative is the most precise term - palliative suggests not addressing underlying cause and managing symptoms only.

Minor Essential Revisions
34. p. 3: Particularly female immigrants or immigrants who are women
35. p. 4: Transition to sentence beginning with campaigns is somewhat awkward
36. p. 4: prevalence of HIV infection.
37. p. 4: Among immigrant women
38. p. 5: Among native women or among all patients including immigrant and native women.
39. p. 5 - migratory or migration process?
40. p. 5: e) change to "motivations and constraints on adherence to treatment."
41. p. 5: hypotheses not hypothesis
42. p. 5: data were
43. p. 6: change to "were" not have been.
44. p. 6: change to 8 native to Spain.

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

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

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.