Reviewer's report

Title: Vulnerability of Bangladeshi street-children to HIV/AIDS: a qualitative study

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Reviewer: Amir Sayem

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The present article covers a very interesting issue about street children in Bangladesh context. Authors utilized appropriate methodology with good description of the methodical processes and discussed results in relatively well manner. Nonetheless, there are several issues that require further works. I have a number of observations as follows:

1. Generally introduction section seems inadequate in description of street children in this country context. Notably, the main aspect of this article is its focus on particular age group for exploring vulnerability of STIs/HIV. Usually the age group of 5-8 and 9-12 years is less focused on such issue that authors aimed at. However, the present introduction section was arranged in a way that only leads one to a qualitative study on street children generally – that is, the present introduction does not specifically justify this study on such particular subjects. Why such particularly age groups is required for study? Authors need to work more on this section with particular focus on the street children within the mentioned specific age group.

2. Methodology section is comparatively well written. However, a brief description of social mapping method and participatory sessions or PGD is required for clear understanding. Additionally, authors need to answer to the following questions: was there any age misrepresentation because of duration of study (for about two years)? Is it possible to present themes and sub-themes in tabular form? In brief, what does Denzin [20] recommend? Was there any compensating measure for taking time of street children? It is expected that children aged five or six years are presumably less likely or unable to actively participate in group discussion or understand matters of discussion. It is also somewhat unusual to discuss such sensitive issues with children aged very low. In this regard, was there any added measure? Or what researchers have done in this particular aspect? Alternatively, how had researchers dealt such concerns?

3. Presentation of results does not seem adequately reasonable. Authors presented results as per themes identified from the data. Since a theme is an abstract form that conceptually covers sub-themes within it. For example, the theme entitled, “Sexual behaviour, health seeking behaviour, and other risk-related behavior” which could be more reasonably presented as “Risk behaviors” or something in more abstract form. Similar observations appear regarding the first and the third theme.
4. In qualitative research, participants’ narratives are undoubtedly crucial in order to present findings and support authors’ interpretations. Notwithstanding authors provided some narratives in justifying interpretations of some important aspects of vulnerabilities, these do not seem sufficient. There are some specific issues where providing participants’ narratives seem necessary. These include, for example, street children’s health seeking behaviors, peer influences in drug abuse, injecting drugs, harassment because of parents’ illegal activities, particularly sex works, etc.

5. Although authors collected data from three categories of street children – that is, (a) sleep in the street without families; (b) sleep in the street with families; and (c) work in the street but return to their homes – there is scant or no description of findings accordingly; a few important findings of vulnerabilities according to such categories may help better understand street children’s deplorable situations and implications for priority interventions and other related initiatives for more particularly vulnerable group of street children in this country context.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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 have no competing interests