Reviewer’s report

Title: Syndymics of syphilis, HCV infection, and methamphetamine use along China’s east coast of Shandong Province with historical low HIV prevalence

Version: 1 Date: 11 January 2013

Reviewer: Yuhua Ruan

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Recently, there has been a growing recognition of the influence of club drugs on HIV-related risk behaviors in China. However, there are few studies conducted in this area. This is one of the first of its kind to be done in China (about the synthetic drug abuse) to investigate the club drug use, HIV/STI infections and their correlates. It is very meaningful of this study to reveal the extremely high risk sexual behaviors among these club drug users. Thus the manuscript provides interesting and important information for future prevention and policy efforts. Some moderate clarifications and editorial changes should be made to strengthen the presentation of the research.

Overall comments:

Prior to publication the entire manuscript needs to be copy-edited in detail to improve clarity, and quality of writing.

Specific suggestions/questions:

1. English grammar. The text needs to be more carefully edited.

2. Recruitment details. The recruitment procedure is not very clear. The author mentioned ‘socio-demographic mapping strategy’, ‘community outreach’, ‘venue-based recruitment’, and ‘peer referrals’, but we do need some detail information on how the sample was recruited.

3. Testing results informed. Whether the participants were informed about the testing results? There is no information in this manuscript. If informed, how? After informed, how about the referrals and treatment?

4. Regular partner. How to define the regular sex partners?

5. Typo. There are many typos in this paper, please check it carefully. For example, the study cities were Jinan and Qingdao in the methods/recruitment and participants part, but the study cities were Jining and Qingdao in the results/correlates for syphilis and HCV infection part and the Table 1 and 2;

6. Data. Please check your data again, some data are not clear. For example, in the results/Characteristics of participants part, it mentioned “28% single, 70.2% currently married or cohabiting and 1.9% divorced or widowed”. If we add these three percentages, it will be 100.1%. The same problems existed in the tables as
well. In the table 1, for the variables “Types of drugs” and “injected drug use”, I think the third column is the col%, but these the sum of the percent is not 100%. And some other problems as well, please check.

After all, it is really a very interesting study, and I am looking forward your revised manuscript.

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 declare that I have no competing interests