Reviewer’s report

Title: Perceived family support and condom use among secondary school female students in Limbe urban city of Cameroon

Version: 2 Date: 16 March 2013

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth Atienzo

Reviewer’s report:

- Major Compulsory Revisions

Background

• The main problem in this section is that there is not a well-defined rationale explaining why a relation between perceptions of family support for condom use and actual female condom use could be expected. The main argument seems to be that previous studies on parent-adolescent communication about sexual issues have shown some association on condom use; however the process of parent-adolescent communication is different to the individual perception of family support. Previous findings regarding this relation are necessary or a more extended conceptual framework.

• It seems to me that the last paragraph of the Background section should be placed before the aim and hypothesis of the study. This paragraph contains an essential part of the definition of the problem and thus should be stated before.

• Another problem is that there is a lack of a description of rough data on condom use among adolescents in Cameroon or Africa in general, as well as data on HIV or teen pregnancy rates. Data from previous surveys or studies could be helpful to delineate the definition of the problem and main question of the study.

Methods

• This section lacks of sample size calculation or any information regarding the selection of the actual sample size. Information regarding response rates is also omitted.

• How was the signed consent form from parent/guardians obtained?

• In the abstract it is stated that “A representative sample of 210 female students selected through disproportional, stratified, simple, random sampling technique from three participating secondary schools” was used, however none of this is stated in the Methods section. A detailed version of the survey process and the selection of the students and schools are needed. How were the school selected? Were all the students within each school from a same class? Or were they randomly selected within each school? How was this random selection done?

• According to the author, data analyses include the chi square test; however it is
not clear which variables were compared.

• The reduced sample size limits the possibility of a more sophisticated analysis, especially considering that only half of the students were sexually active. However, the author could make an effort to improve data analysis. For instance it could be interesting to compare sociodemographics of the students according to the perception of family support for condom use, or to intend to construct an index for the perception of family support.

Results
• The results section should be designated to present solely the data obtained from the study. Avoid using information different to the results, for instance: “Single persons are predisposed to sexual temptations which might increase their vulnerability to STIs and HIV/AIDS” (first paragraph of the results section).
• Results regarding condom use are lacking. This is a very important limitation since condom use is the main dependant variable. There is no mention of this in the results section.
• A 2 X 2 table showing comparisons among variables is needed.
• The author state that no significant association between any of the items of perceived family support and condom use was found, however it is not clear which of the different variables of condom use was used for the bivariate analysis.

Discussion
• The statement: “techniques that increase the occurrence of parent and female student’s discussion concerning condoms and HIV/AIDS will prove useful in preventing HIV/AIDS among female students” should be based on a strong argument since the results of this particular study doesn’t seems to support the hypothesis that family support about condoms influence adolescents sex behaviors.
• The statement: “Clearly, these findings suggest that knowledge about condoms is not the obstacle” it’s improper since no information regarding knowledge of correct condom use was collected and thus analyzed.
• The statement: “Majority of the respondents perceived that family support for condom use to prevent HIV/AIDS was necessary” it’s improper since there was not an item asking how necessary is family support to the prevention of HIV transmission.
• The author doesn’t describe the limitations of the study. It is important that the possible reviewers understand why the results of this particular study are different to the one expected or to other similar studies.
• Also, the strengths of the study could be highlighted. For instance, whereas parent-adolescent communication has being widely explored, especially on developed countries like the U.S., teenagers perceptions of family support of
condom use has not and does it constitutes a relevant contribution. However, 

- The author should give an idea of the implications of this study, both to future research or policy design in health or education. For instance, the paper could be strengthened with a discussion of possible implications of parent-based interventions versus school-based sex education programs. Gender issues should also be mentioned, especially considering that parent-child communication is affected both by gender of the adolescent and the gender of the parents.

- Minor Essential Revisions

  - In the first paragraph the author state that according to social cognitive models “…the adoption of productive behaviour is based on an individual’s perceptions of their susceptibility to infections and the benefits of behaviour change”. However, it should be considered that these models include a variety of constructs and that they do not rely solely on individual aspects as determinants of behaviors, as the author seems to affirm.

  - On the measures section, the variable Condom use during last sexual intercourse is defined as: “Did you condom the last time you had sexual intercourse with a male partner?”. Please add the word USE.

  - On the measures section, please correct the word CONDOM on the variable: Perceived family support for condom use

  - On the measures section, variable Consistent condom use, please correct the phrase: “This measure was derived form the question” on the variable:

  - On the measures section, please correct the word CONDOM on the variable Perceived family support for condom use

- Discretionary Revisions

The paper could be improved if the title of the manuscript specifies that the study relates to family support regarding use of condom instead of only family support. Family support includes a variety of processes and thus the actual title can give a different idea of the purpose of the paper to the potential audience.

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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