Reviewer’s report

Title: Actor-partner effects associated with experiencing intimate partner violence or coercion among male couples enrolled in an HIV prevention trial

Version: 3
Date: 14 February 2014
Reviewer: Guy de Bruyn

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I have read the revised manuscript, the reviewers comments, and the responses provided by the authors. In addition, I located the entry for the clinical trial in clinicaltrials.gov, but was unable to retrieve the published article describing the results of the clinical trial.

The authors describe a cross-sectional analysis of 95 male couples who met an initial set of screening criteria and provided further data that was used to determine eligibility for the RCT. Two responses, namely a history of IPV and/or reported coercion, excluded couples from randomization. However, these couples received individual VCT and follow up data were collected. This cross-sectional analysis was based on the baseline data.

A key point of concern in the reviews of Prof Hewson was the nature of the study, which through the process of revision is clear to this reader. A further concern was the use of the STROBE checklist or guideline for article formatting. In examining the elements of that guideline, it is my view that the authors have addressed those key elements in the revised text.

A further concern regarding use of p-values was noted by Prof Hewson. In this regard, it is my view that the authors have been appropriately guarded in their interpretation of the data.

Declaration of competing interests:

I am a former colleague of Patrick Sullivan (the second author), consider him a personal friend, and at his recommendation, served as an external reviewer to the Emory Center for AIDS Research, which funded the study. In this role, the CFAR paid travel costs to attend a meeting in Atlanta.