Reviewer's report

Title: "Blood from a finger prick is to test for Malaria." A qualitative exploration of HIV testing preferences in Tanzania

Version: 1 Date: 20 March 2014

Reviewer: Elia John Mmbaga

Reviewer's report:

The manuscript is well written and is of at most important and a complement in the fight against HIV infection in Tanzania. I offer insight on various issues to be considered in the scaling up of HIV testing in the country.

However, to be appealing to the readers, the following suggestion would be useful:

Major comments:
1. The title carried only a single expression from one participant and does not carry the main finding of the results presented. The interplay between the three major domains and the need to address them should feature in this work.
2. Women and men in Tanzania have different testing opportunities and access and their perception and use of this service will definitely be different. The results should reflect this gender differences and presented by gender.

Minor comments
1. What was the age range of the participants in the interviews for IDI and FGD?
2. Most people are sensitive to age and gender of counselors and knowing the mean age of the different participants would shed light on the results. For instance, a person preferring a counselor aged 50 years would probably be around 50 years. Most young people do not like to discuss sexual related issues and HIV testing with older counselors but rather consider age mates are more youth friendly
3. What was specifically done for this study to ensure that it focuses much on the breadth rather than depth? Was depth not an important aspect of this study? Would be good to understand in depth what shape these different testing preferences
4. Did the authors use and qualitative software? How did they develop memos during analysis?
5. It is contradictory when participants mention to prefer large hospitals which usually area high volume and in some other part mentioning that they do not prefer high volume facilities? (see page 8)
6. Discuss how paying for test would affect the usefulness of HIV testing and counseling and the future uptake of care and treatment?
Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests: none