Reviewer's report

Title: Very low risk of attrition among adults on antiretroviral therapy in the Rwandan national program: A retrospective cohort analysis of 6, 12, and 18 month outcomes.

Version: 3 Date: 29 May 2014

Reviewer: Isaac Zulu

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Inclusion criteria- Could the authors provide a flow diagram summarizing the recruitment as described under inclusion criteria?

2. Performance based financing-The authors compared only more recent and older performance based financing sites for attrition. Did all the sites have performance based financing? What was the outcome in sites without performance based financing compared to those with performance based financing?

3. Were the older performance based financing and more recent performance based financing sites matched in the analysis? If not this should be listed as a limitation as other factors could have contributed to better outcomes in older performance based financing sites.

4. The authors did not find any effect of home visits on attrition. Could they provide a possible explanation for this? Could they also clarify whether the home visits in this program could be considered as community support services? The discussion would be useful considering the advocacy for investments in community based support activities to enhance retention in Pre ART, ART and PMTCT especially with the role out of Option B+?

Discretionary Revisions

1. The reader would assume that the lower CD4 Count group that had higher attrition was mainly in the in-patients? Would that be correct? Could the authors show, to clarify this assumption, what the average CD4 count was in patients with WHO stage 1 and 2 who had better retention versus hospitalised (in-patients) who had higher attrition?

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.