Reviewer's report

Title: An assessment of fishing communities around Lake Victoria, Uganda, as potential populations for future HIV vaccine efficacy studies.

Version: 2 Date: 24 July 2014

Reviewer: Shayesta Dhalla

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions:

1. In the Introduction, it should be explained why fishing communities in Uganda are at high risk for HIV (e.g., mobility). For this purpose, the authors can also reference the article: (Asiki et al., Willingness to participate in HIV vaccine efficacy trials among high-risk men and women from fishing communities along Lake Victoria in Uganda, Vaccine, 2013).

2. In the Methods section, the authors state that “Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect data on socio-demographic characteristics, HIV risk behaviours, …”. Were these interviews by trained interviewers, or self-administered questionnaires? Also, what was the language the questionnaires were administered in?

3. In the Methods section, the Baganda tribe/ethnic group should be defined (i.e., the authors should provide a description of this ethnic group).

4. As this study is assessing retention rates and willingness to participate, were the participants in this study given any type of reimbursement or financial incentive (e.g., for travel or other)? Similarly, this should be addressed in the second paragraph of the Discussion section, where the authors are discussing enhanced retention strategies.

5. Some of the Results presented correspond to the Results of the following article (“High Incidence of HIV-1 Infection in a General Population of Fishing Communities around Lake Victoria, Uganda” Kiwanuka et al., 2014). The authors should reference this article, and not merely repeat all the results.

6. Results section, Line 132: How many years in the community does the PRR of 1.59 (95% CI, 1.44 - 1.76) refer to?

7. In the Discussion section, the authors state “Our observed retention rate of 77% is quite low for vaccine efficacy trials”. Could the authors give a reference for this statement? What is your definition of a high or low retention rate for vaccine efficacy trials? In addition, what do you regard as an adequate incidence rate for efficacy trials in this population— a reference should be provided for this
8. In the Discussion section, the authors state that “Retention was higher among participants who had stayed for more than one year in the communities”. However, the authors go on to state that “Lack of WTP was significantly higher among folks with 10 or more years of stay in communities”. There seems to be a discrepancy between retention and WTP in this population. What would be some of the reasons for this discrepancy (ie. different confounders, etc.)?

9. In the Limitations section, it should be discussed that (1) this was a cross-sectional representation of retention rates using prevalence ratios (2) only 10% of the participants were not WTP, and this could potentially be a results of socially desirable responses, if this would be accurate in your population.

Minor essential revisions:

1. In the Methods section, the authors should mention the dates of data collection.

2. Table 3: The title of the Table should state “Multivariate analysis of factors associated with lack of willingness to participate (WTP) in hypothetical HIV vaccine trials.” The authors should indicate that is is a multivariate model.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**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.