Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge about AIDS and HIV Risk-related Sexual Behavior among Nigerian Naval Personnel

Version: 1 Date: 5 April 2004

Reviewer: Deborah Bain

Reviewer's report:

General

This research provides important data that contributes to a better understanding of HIV risk behaviors in the military, an important risk group in many countries. The survey was conducted well and the qualitative data in particular adds a lot to our understanding of risk behaviors and possible interventions. This contribution from local researchers is particularly welcome.

The data presented in the manuscript was well-analyzed and presented. However, I would like to suggest a number of minor revisions, primarily in grammar and word choice.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

I do not have any major compulsory revisions.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1. General comment: I recommend the authors report decimal numbers consistently throughout the paper. In some cases numbers were rounded to the nearest whole number, and in others the tenths decimal place was used.

Abstract:

2. The qualitative data was given short shrift in the abstract – I recommend putting a little more emphasis on those findings.

3. The mean knowledge score reported in the abstract (7.4) is different from that reported in the results section and Table 2 (7.1). This discrepancy should be resolved.

4. Change sentence 2 of the results to “Although the average number of correct answers to AIDS knowledge questions was 7.4 out of 10 points, 52% of respondents…”

5. Change sentence 3 of the results to report the period of time for multiple partners (e.g. within the past year? 6 months?)

6. Second to last sentence of results: Move the word “significantly” after “reported”.

Background:

7. Paragraph 1, sentence 2: the increase from 1.8% to 5.8% is more of a 3-fold increase than a 5-fold increase.

8. Paragraph 1, sentence 3: change the word “notified” to “reported”.

9. Paragraph 1, sentence 5: change to: “HIV/AIDS is a huge burden on the nation’s health care system, yet the figures probably underestimate…”

10. Paragraph 1, sentence 6: change to: “Although the majority of Nigerians are familiar with
HIV/AIDS, risky sexual behaviors are widespread…

11. Paragraph 2, sentence 5: grammar error – change “exceed” to “exceeded”

12. Paragraph 2, last sentence: change to “The objectives were to assess knowledge of HIV/AIDS and to explore risky sexual behaviors in order to plan appropriate primary prevention interventions.”

Methods:
“Measures” section

13. Paragraph 2, sentence 5: change “one of the homes of the FGD participants” to “the home of one FGD participant”.

Results:
“Knowledge about HIV/AIDS” section

14. Sentence 5: change “one get” to “one can get”

“Sexual behavior and risk perception” section

15. Paragraph 2, last sentence: it’s stated that 5 reasons were given for not using condoms with FSW, yet 7 reasons are given. Also, it seems that the answers were listed as mutually exclusive, yet logically more than one answer could apply to one person. Please explain.

16. Paragraph 3, sentence 2: please clarify the comparison group for the bivariate analysis: those who had been transferred within country (locally?), including or not including those who had never been transferred?

17. Paragraph 3, sentence 4: change “had had sex” to “have had sex”

“Content of risky sexual behavior” section

18. Paragraph 3, sentence 1: change “CSW” to “FSW” to be consistent with the rest of the manuscript

Disclaimer Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Abstract conclusion:

19. Change the wording of the first sentence to say: “Many naval personnel report participating in high-risk sexual behaviors which may increase their risk of acquiring and spreading HIV.”

Background:

20. Paragraph 1, sentence 3: change the word “notified” to “reported”.

21. Paragraph 1, sentence 5: change to: “HIV/AIDS is a huge burden on the nation’s health care system, yet the figures probably underestimate…”

22. Paragraph 1, sentence 6: change to: “Although the majority of Nigerians are familiar with HIV/AIDS, risky sexual behaviors are widespread…”

23. Paragraph 2: In the last two sentences, I suggest using civilian and military HIV prevalence rates from the same year, as data from 3 years apart is less easy to synthesize.

Methods:

24. I’m not familiar with the method of “balloting” – please explain.

25. Please clarify the following: Were the lists of personnel complete? How was random selection conducted? How were participants approached once their name had been chosen? To whom did they return their completed questionnaires, and within what period of time?

26. Please define “ratings” as compared to “officers”.

Results:

“Demographic profile and work conditions” section

27. Paragraph 1, sentence 7: the number of transfers is stated as 1 to 25, yet the authors had already mentioned that not everyone was transferred. Either restate the range as 0 to 25, or clarify
that the numbers given are among those who were transferred. The same holds true for the lifetime number of sexual partners for which a range is given in the “Sexual behavior and risk perception section.

“Sexual behavior and risk perception” section
28. I’m curious to know the perception of risk of HIV among those who had risky sexual behavior (e.g. multiple partners, sex with FSW, lack of condom use). The numbers for perceived risk seemed to be for all participants.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I know the manuscript's second author in a professional capacity.