Reviewer's report

Title: Khat chewing and HIV risk behaviour among in-school and out-of-school youth in Ethiopia.

Version: Date: 27 July 2005

Reviewer: Cheng-Fang F Yen

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General
This study compared 20,434 in-school and out-of-school youths in Ethiopia and examined the associations of substance use, school status and demographic characteristics with risky sexual behaviors. The results indicated that sex, age, school status, and substance use were significantly associated with risky sexual behaviors.

Strengths: Large sample size, recruiting out-of-school youths into the study.

Several aspects of the manuscript warrant commentary.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The author should provide more descriptions about the process of data collecting. Was the data collected by the face-to-face interviewing? Where was the place that the interviewing was conducted? How many youths refused to participate the study?
2. To recruit the out-of-school youths into the study is one of strength in this study. The authors should describe more about the method of sampling from the community. “Segmentation methods” (page 5, line 13) were not clear enough to let the readers understand the content.
3. In the “Abstract” section, the authors described that “multiple sexual partners” was one of items of risky sexual behaviors examined in this study. However, it was not examined in the context.
4. The authors explained the magnitude of “other substances” in the footnotes of Table 2 and 3 but not in the context. The authors should provide more explanations for it in the “Methods” section, and more introduction for the substances used specifically in the East Africa to make the readers outsiders the area understand.
5. Page 9, line 15 to16: The authors contributed the association between increased age and unsafe sexual behaviors to “the effect of residual confounding from use of alcohol and other substances”. The authors should provide more explanation that how the “residual confounding” occur in the logistic regression.
6. Page 10, line 3 to 4 and line 19 to 20 and page 11, line 18 to 20: The authors proposed the possibility that the underlying disruptive behavioral problems, such as ADHD, ODD and CD may account for the association between unsafe sexual behaviors and out-of-school and khat chewing. The authors should provide more evidences from the previous studies on this issue to support their proposition.

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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. Table 2 and 3: The footnote “…alcohol intake (3 levels)” should be corrected.
2. The authors need to correct the use of English in this manuscript.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Which journal?: Appropriate or potentially appropriate for BMC Medicine: an article of importance in its field

What next?: Accept for publication in BMC Medicine after minor essential revisions

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

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.