Reviewer's report

Title: Does population screening for Chlamydia trachomatis raise anxiety among those tested?
Findings from a population based chlamydia screening study

Version: 1 Date: 11 November 2005

Reviewer: Jan Hendrik H Richardus

Reviewer's report:

General

This article is very well written. The research question is defined clearly and the report subsequently describes the methods and results appropriately. Tables, figure and the abstract are good. The conclusions are well-balanced and adequately supported by the data. I am not fully competent to assess the statistical analysis, but it appears to be appropriate. The main limitations of the study (low response rates and different sampling methods) are dealt with adequately and do not appear to weaken the results of the study substantially.

Discretionary Revisions

My main comment is that I find the article rather ‘sterile’. It describes anxiety, depression and self-esteem in relationship to Chlamydia screening in very abstract terms. This is of course useful from the viewpoint of standardization and comparison with other screening programmes, but leaves one wondering how these terms relate to being screened for Chlamydia. What kind of anxiety could be raised by the threat of having Chlamydia? Why would a person become depressed? How would self-esteem be effected? Obviously in-depth study and discussion of these questions are beyond the scope of this article, but as a reader I would like to have a ‘feel’ of the issues behind the general terms in relationship to the disease under consideration. This could be addressed in the background and in the discussion sections.

In this respect it is important to refer to the recent article “Acceptability and Consequences of Screening for Chlamydia trachomatis by Home-Based Urine Testing” by Götz et al. (Sexually Transmitted Diseases, September 2005, Vol. 32, No. 9, p.557–562) This article has a wider scope, but touches on the areas of anxiety, stress, and self-esteem in those receiving a positive or negative test result after home-based screening. Apart from being a necessary reference in the background section (after reference 5), it may help illustrate some of the psychological issues in Chlamydia screening and provide more depth to the current article.

What next?: Accept after discretionary revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests