Reviewer's report

Title: Assessing effects of a media campaign on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention in Nigeria: results from the VISION project

Version: 2 Date: 24 March 2006

Reviewer: Lalit Dandona

Reviewer's report:

General

Some issues still need to be addressed in this manuscript. The numbering of my comments below is the same as in my original review to facilitate easy comparison.

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

1. My query about comparison of pre-intervention levels of HIV/AIDS awareness and condom use in the population (the major outcome variables in this paper) with these levels post-intervention is not addressed by the authors. If a baseline study assessing HIV/AIDS awareness and condom use in the population was done, this comparison should be possible. Whatever the reason for not doing this pre-intervention and post-intervention comparison in this manuscript, it needs to stated clearly. I could not find a clear explanation for this in the discussion section. An explicit paragraph on the limitations of results and interpretations this manuscript is needed in the discussion section.

2. Methods and results:

a. Response OK

b. Response OK

c. It is unclear how the same criteria for low, medium and high program exposure could be applied to both the cumulative number of programs and individual programs for respective media (page 6, first paragraph), given that the number of programs was only one for print and two for TV compared with seven for radio. A better explanation is needed for this.

d. Response OK

e. The description given for the estimates in the cover letter could be added in the footnote of Table 3 for easier understanding by the reader.

f. Response OK

g. Explain “estimated high” and “estimated medium” in footnotes of Tables 4-6, and if the reference for these was “low” it should be mentioned in the tables.

3. I could not find an explicit description of the limitations of the results and interpretations in the discussion section. This is needed.

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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. Response OK

2. Abstract. In the results section first sentence, replace “very high” with “high. The three odds ratios mentioned in the results (1.47, 2.20, 2.79) should be accompanied by their 95% CIs. The conclusion needs rephrasing: Consider deleting “Mass media can be an effective means to reach the population” as it is too generic. This paper does not present any data on at-risk groups – how can it then comment on at-risk groups in the conclusion?

Response OK to previous comments 3-14

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory 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