Reviewer's report

Title: Factors associated with HIV infection and transmissible behaviors among male injection drug users: a cross-sectional study in Long An, Vietnam

Version: 2 Date: 17 April 2006

Reviewer: Andrei Kozlov

Reviewer's report:

General
This paper reports the results of an interesting and potentially important study of injection drug users (IDU) in Long An, Vietnam. There are limited data on HIV prevalence and risk behaviors of IDU from the Vietnam. The results provide clear evidence for the extent of the current HIV epidemic among IDU in Long An. The methods used in this study were appropriate. The results are clearly presented. The manuscript adheres to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition. The writing is acceptable. At the same time there are several issues which should be clarified prior to publishing of this manuscript.

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

* The Methods section needs to be clarified in several points: population and sampling methods
  - The rationale for choosing Long An as a study area are not described.
  - What were exactly the inclusion criteria for the study? How often people should be injecting in the previous month?
  - The rationale for not including women in the study are not described.
  -The characteristics of “hot spots” need to be described in more details.
  - Where the interviews and blood testing took place?
  - How did participants get information about their HIV test results?
  - How many participants (among 284) actually received their test results?
What efforts were conducted by the study team to let know all the participants (especially, HIV positive) about their test result.
  - Did participants receive Pre- and Post- HIV test counseling? If “Yes”, who did provide it?

* Results/Discussion
The factor which is significantly associated with HIV infection such as injecting in other cities needs to be explained in more details.
Did the researchers find out the specific cities where participants have been traveling to? If “Yes”, what were HIV prevalence rates in those areas?

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
None

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
* The title of the manuscript seems to be more adequate to study findings if the authors will change it to “HIV prevalence and Factors associated with HIV infection among male IDU in Long An, Vietnam”
* In the laboratory method section seems to be important to describe in more details Testing Strategy III (for example, EIISA was conducted only for HIV positives in quick test or for all tests)

* Not clear for what reasons in the results section the authors include information about statistically non significant association (A higher educational level seemed to be associated with a lower prevalence of HIV....)

* The sentences “In the present study, 65,5% of IDUs started their injection drug use in the year 2000 or later.”And next one could be removed because sound confusing.

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

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

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.