Reviewer’s report

Title: High potentials of escalating HIV transmission in a low prevalence setting in rural Tanzania

Version: 2 Date: 22 October 2006

Reviewer: Basia Zaba

Reviewer’s report:

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?
   No question as such, it is mainly a descriptive study – they wanted to find out the pattern of HIV infection in this relatively isolated population

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?
   Yes – a few more details about the questionnaire would be useful

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?
   They should provide information about the sensitivity and specificity of the HIV test used. Controlling is not needed.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   I don’t know what the relevant standards are

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   Yes

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

7. Is the writing acceptable?
   In parts the English is a bit clumsy – a few clarifications are noted below. Could do with a good copy editor.

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

Abstract
   Clarify “Lifetime non-utilisation of condoms predominated by 78%.”

Sampling
   Top of page 6. “each sub-village consists of ten households that fall under one administrative leader known as the “ten-cell leader” locally known as “balozi”. Clarify – I think what it is trying to say is that each village is subdivided into such units. In modern Tanzania balozi tend to be responsible for far more than 10 households each.

Questionnaire
   Provide summary information on design used and whether it was based on an instrument such as DHS that had already been tested and validated elsewhere

Lab methods
   Top of page 7. Give sensitivity and specificity of the saliva tests for HIV (compared to currently used rapid Elisas) since other researchers have found them to be unreliable

Statistical analysis
   Top of page 8: “… and associated risk given source of infection.” Clarify – is what is meant “the perceived risk of a potential source of infection”?

Results
   First para: give refusals rates for participation in questionnaire survey

Middle of page 9: “In contrast to women, higher HIV prevalence was associated with marital separation and being either widowed or divorced” I think they mean “in contrast, in women …”

Sensitivity analysis of adult HIV prevalence

Bottom page 10: a better method might be to statistically predict HIV prevalence in non attenders based on their socio-demographic characteristics (see DHS methods described in Kenya 2001 survey)

Major Compulsory Revisions (which the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

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

**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