Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 19 November 2006

Reviewer: John Changalucha

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper is good and highlights the need to intensify intervention implementation in the area if we are to halt the epidemic at this early stage.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. In all the analysis, for comparison between groups/factors either percentage or OR with CIs but no p-values are given. This may sometimes lead to wrong conclusions. For example they state that the prevalence of HIV in rural areas was significantly higher in men than women. However, if you compare the two percentages the p-value is 0.06, which is not significant. Also HIV Prevalence in Basotu was only significantly higher in men when compared to that of muslur and Mwanga and not other areas, and for women it was significantly higher for all areas except Nduguti. So I suggest the p-values should be shown.

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

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. Mean age at first sex is given a 17 +/- 3SD. Is it in months or years or what?

-----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
1. Information on PMTCT services in the study area. It will be useful if the authors could give the information because it has been suggested that availability of PMTCT services may change the patterns of ANC use and hence impact on ANC-based HIV prevalence.
2. Validation of the assay used for HIV testing. It is Good Clinical and Laboratory Practice to assess the performance of the new assay in your own setting before being used. It will be useful if the authors could comment on the performance of the assay in their own setting.
3. Timing of ANC surveillance. It is not clear from the methods section whether ANC surveillance was done at the same time when the community survey was done. It is important to know this information if we are to compare the results from the two groups.

What next?: Accept after minor essential 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.