Reviewer's report

Title: Lack of knowledge and perceived stigma influence care-seeking for sexually transmitted infections among persons attending public clinics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil: A qualitative study.

Version: 1 Date: 22 September 2006

Reviewer: J. Dennis Fortenberry

Reviewer's report:

General
Overall, this is nicely conceived and conducted research addresses an important issue that remains under-studied across a variety of settings. The manuscript itself is well-organized and clearly presented. The results are useful to the STI research, clinical and prevention communities. I have relatively few comments that could improve the manuscript’s quality.

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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. The research interviews were conducted in Portuguese, but the direct quotes from patients are in English. The methods section probably should give additional attention to the standards for translation.

2. The study of stigma in the American South by Bronwen Lichtenstein (Soc Sci Med 2003; 57:2435-2445) seems especially relevant to the findings and the discussion but is not cited. I find this to be an especially important omission.

3. For non-Brazilians, a bit more description of the attitudes, and types of sexual culture in Brazil might be useful. One is left applying interpretations and standards that may be inappropriate.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Review of existing literature would suggest the importance of providers in both knowledge and the stigma of STI. This is confirmed in the results of the current study but it makes one wish for a better understanding of provider perceptions and interactions.

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: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests.