Reviewer's report

Title: Determinants of sexual activity and its relation to cervical cancer risk among South African women

Version: 1 Date: 20 June 2007

Reviewer: Patti Gravitt

Reviewer's report:

General
The paper addresses an important topic that may have relevance to direct targeted interventions aimed at reduction of sexual risk taking behaviors among South African women to reduce the burden of STI-associated diseases prevalent in the country, such as AIDS and cervical cancer. However, this general aim was largely inferred from the background and discussion, and was not clearly articulated. No abstract was available to the reviewer. The restriction of this analysis to largely older women is a significant limitation to this analysis.

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

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

The paper will be enhanced with addition of more detail in the statistical analysis section, which as currently written is quite difficult to follow. Much has to be inferred from the tables. Please clearly state that the population in Table 1 is restricted to the controls.

Add Table legends and titles which clearly indicate the contents of the table and the analysis.

Tables 3 & 4 present data that is well-described in the literature, and distracts from the main analysis of determinants of sexual risk behavior in a population in South Africa.

The discussion should include some comments to acknowledge that because you are analyzing controls from an age-matched case-control study of cervical cancer, you are significantly limited in making inferences about sexual behaviors in younger women (only 6% of the population was under 30 years). This is really the important group to target in terms of setting goals of sexual risk reduction.

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

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

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 of limited interest

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests