Reviewer's report

Title: Changes in Sexual Behaviour among Young People associated with HIV Prevalence Decline in Zambia

Version: 4 Date: 3 January 2007
Reviewer: Anne Buve

Reviewer’s report:

General

The paper has improved considerably and most comments of the reviewers have been addressed.

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

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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)

The English may need some revision. For instance on page 10, first paragraph: it should be "admission to hospital" and not "hospital admittance".
Also Chelstone has been spelled as Chelstone and Chelston. Please be consistent.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1. Page 11, bottom: this seems to me to be a rather long-winded way of saying that child bearing is the result of sexual intercourse. It should really not be surprising that single women who have had a child have a much higher risk of HIV than single women who did not have a child and that the difference in HIV risk was much smaller in married women. Married women are sexually active, single women may or may not be sexually active.

2. Page 13, last sentence of first paragraph. I would be more cautious about interpreting the "decline" in HIV prevalence among "virgins". First of all numbers are small. Secondly HIV in virgins is evidence that there is a problem with the validity of reported sexual behaviour. However it can not be taken as a measure of the bias. The prevalence of HIV is not only determined by sexual activity (yes or no) but also by the risk taking. Young people may be very sexually active and deny it, yet be consistent condom users and have no HIV infection.

3. Page 15, last paragraph: the references 20-25 seem to be out of place here.

4. Page 17, last sentence of first paragraph. I do not understand this sentence. This sentence seems to imply that the authors feel young women with casual partners may be more conscious of the risk of HIV, because society condemns this behaviour. Is that correct?

5. Page 18, fourth last sentence: see my comment n°2.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

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'