Author's response to reviews

Title: Gender distribution of adult patients on highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) in Southern Africa: a systematic review.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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Dear Editor,

Re: Resubmission of manuscript

We are pleased to note that our paper was provisionally accepted with minor requests for changes.

Regarding the reviewers comments, our responses are as below:

Reviewer concern: 1. The authors seem to be resisting the idea of clearly acknowledging the limitation that double counting may give an erroneous impression of more confidence in the gender ratios than there actually is. For example, Table 2 suggests that there were three nationwide studies in the same time period 2001-2005 which show a female to male ratio of 1.6-1.8. If there were substantial overlap of patients counted in these three nationwide studies, and this were not acknowledged, there would be an erroneous impression that three different large sets of patients show a high female to male ratio in Malawi. It would be useful to clearly mention this limitation in the discussion.

Response: We have now clearly indicated this fact in the text. The relevant paragraph is the one just before the conclusion section (which is the last paragraph of the discussion section).

Reviewer concern 2. Table 2. Some percentages for the genders are missing. For study reference 32, if females were >50% the female to male ratio can be shown as >1.

Response: We have provided in the revised table all the ratios now.

Editors comments
We were required to format the manuscript in conforming with guidelines for the journal.

Our response: we have been able to do that.

Thank you editor.
Adamson Muula