Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1  Date: 26 December 2006

Reviewer: Lalit Dandona

Reviewer’s report:

General

This paper has potentially useful information, but seems too simplistic in the current form.

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

There are guidelines available for reporting of systematic reviews and meta-analysis, e.g. MOOSE guidelines. The authors should use some such guidelines and mention in the paper how these guidelines were met.

There could be overlap between studies from the same country in Table 1, as several studies are referred to as “National”. It would be useful to give more information about each cited study in terms of coverage to ensure that there is no double-counting.

In order to provide a better context for the findings in this paper the authors should consider further analysis from the reviewed studies than that reported currently as a summary in Table 1.

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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)

Table 1. The figures shown are not “prevalence” as mentioned, but number of females and males with HIV. These numbers do not seem to be same as in the 2006 UNAIDS report. Authors should check these numbers for accuracy. There is a calculation error for the ratio shown for Namibia.

Table 2 should be part of the manuscript, not a separate additional file. Year of publication is mentioned in the header but it is not shown for the studies.

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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 whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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