Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 2 Date: 4 February 2007

Reviewer: Lalit Dandona

Reviewer’s report:

General

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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)

1. The explanation that the authors give in the cover letter to address the issue of possible double counting of patients in studies from the same country should be part of the paper.

2. The text in the Results section of the paper should report a summary of the findings. In the current version no findings are summarized in the Results text.

3. Table 2 could report female to male ratio for ARV, which would facilitate easy comparison with the ratios in Table 1.

4. The sequence of countries in Table 2 and the studies reported for a country should be based on some order. For example, the countries could be in alphabetical order, and the studies within each country could be grouped as those having free treatment, paying programs, and mixed. If there are more than one study in these groups for a country chronological order of data could be used for the sequence.

5. Why does the Tanzania study in Table 2 show <50% and >50%? Actual data should be presented. If these data are not available, the reason should be given.

6. Some references show et al for authors. BMC requires all author names.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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: 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