Reviewer's report

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

Version: 2 Date: 25 February 2007

Reviewer: Lisa Hirschhorn

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors have made significant improvements in the paper. However despite the paper addressing an important issue, the reviewer will feel that the paper fails to make a strong and coherent argument to answer these important questions. The introduction, which is improved from the earlier version still fails to make a coherent argument why the main thesis is important and the background which led to it.

While there is more information on the literature and extraction, the authors should documented how they ensured that articles from the same program are referring to separate, non-overlapping populations in care.

The results section is still very sparse and some analyses described in the methods, such as comparing ratios are not found beyond a summary statement in the discussion.

The tables, while also improved, still do not allow the reader to draw any conclusions regarding ratios of women in men in treatment versus in the country. The authors themselves do not seem to be able to draw this conclusion as well (abstract sentence using the term ‘appears’).

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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)

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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What next?: Reject because too small an advance to publish

Level of interest: An article of insufficient interest to warrant publication in a scientific/medical journal

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

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

'I declare that I have no competing interests' below