Reviewer's report


Version: 1 Date: 8 February 2008

Reviewer: Rakhi Dandona

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Major Compulsory Revisions

This paper reports HIV/AIDS awareness and risk behaviour among the pregnant women in Kazakhstan. The major limitation of this paper is poor description of methodology which restricts the understanding of the study findings.

Background

1. Please describe the aim/objective of this paper at the end of this section.
2. Some description of scenario of HIV/AIDS in Kazakhstan would be useful.

Methods

3. Please specify the following about the study population:
   a. What criteria were used to select the 226 pregnant women for this study?
   b. How many pregnant women were contacted of whom the 226 women participated?
   c. Were these women first time users of the antenatal clinic for this pregnancy or were seen previously at the antenatal clinic for this pregnancy?
   d. How were the four antenatal clinics selected? How many such clinics are there in Semey?
   e. Which women were selected for the open interview?
4. How were data collected from the study population â## interviews or self-administered questionnaire?
5. Please describe the questionnaire/study instrument that was used to collect these data. Include description of the variables presented in this paper.
6. Paragraph 3 - The details of the formula for confidence intervals can be omitted.
7. Was this study approved by an Ethics Committee? Please provide details.

Results

8. Study population â## All the missing data should be referred to in Table 1 and
9. Table 1
a. What does the 95% CI denote in this Table? It is inaccurate.
b. What is the difference between employed and laborer, clerical, professional, etc?

10. General knowledge, page 5
a. How was the question about the source of general knowledge about HIV/AIDS? Were they read out the possible response options or was it an open-ended question?
b. How was the analyses done if more than one response option was given by a respondent for the source of information?
c. No statistics are presented for the reported significance. Only comparative proportion of the responses across the groups is used in these data.

11. Knowledge about transmission and symptoms, page 6
a. Table 2 - A very important finding here is that a high proportion of women responded â##do not knowâ## for these questions in addition to incorrect responses. Please discuss.
b. Another important finding is that half of these women were not aware of symptoms of HIV. Please discuss.

12. Page 6 â## No statistics are provided for the reported statistically significant findings.

13. Risk behaviour and protection, page 8
a. Were these questions designed to assess the attitude towards condom use or actual practice of condom use?
b. 96% of the women reported only one partner in the last 6 months. What would be the basis for responses to the question about condom use with casual partners?
c. Were there any women who were not aware of condoms?

Discussion

14. Page 9, paragraph 2 â## Please provide reference for HIV epidemic in Kazakhstan.

15. Page 9, paragraph 3 â## Some description of the study methodology (as mentioned above) would be useful to understand the reasons for â##do not knowâ## responses.

16. The comparisons with data from other studies are reasonable. However, little attempt is made to explain the study findings or provide a context for the findings. Also, generalisation of these data is incorrect.
17. Conclusion is repetition of what is presented in discussion.

Minor Essential Revisions

18. Background, paragraph 2, lines 3-4 Please provide reference for this statement.

**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:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.