Reviewer's report

Title: A hidden HIV epidemic among women in Vietnam

Version: 1 Date: 7 September 2007

Reviewer: Sudha Sivaram

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)

This is an informative paper about a vulnerable group, women, in Vietnam. Considering the importance of addressing prevention efforts to women, this paper provides a comprehensive review of their risk and contexts that place them at risk for HIV acquisition. There are some revisions suggested.

1. On Page 9, there is a short section on female IDU behavior. Please refer to work of Go, VF; Quan, VM et al. Their work on gender gaps and vulnerabilities, intra-couple communication might better inform this section in particular and other sections in general.

2. On Page 13, you mention extra-marital sexual relations, migrant populations as separate headings under which you discuss women's risk for HIV. Perhaps reorganizing these topics under a heading such as 'heterosexual male behavior and women's vulnerability' would help tie this discussion together. Under this, you include you can also include discussions on pre-marital behaviors. It appears that male heterosexual behaviors place women at risk and this section needs to be tightened a bit.

3. The paper will be further strengthened if the authors organize their discussions that will propose specific intervention recommendations for women. Currently, the discussion alludes to some interventions - more testing, more surveillance programs for women etc. This section can benefit by developing a model/flowchart that illustrates specific risk exposure and corresponding measures for intervention. You can also discuss factors that will facilitate/pose barriers to these intervention. 4. The authors need to do a check on spelling and grammar.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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.