Reviewer's report

Title: Systematic Review of Effectiveness of School-Based Sexual Health Interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Version: 3 Date: 6 September 2007

Reviewer: Ademola Ajuwon

Reviewer's report:

General
General comments
To a large extent the authors have satisfactorily revised the contents of the paper and addressed most of the concerns raised on the paper. However, I have a few more areas of concern and suggestions for the authors. The suggestions are provided below.

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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 reference format used does not conform to that of BMC Public Health. According to the recommendations from BMC "All references must be numbered consecutively, in square brackets, in the order in which they are cited in the text, followed by any in tables or legends. Reference citations should not appear in titles or headings. Each reference must have an individual reference number". The authors should revise the paper accordingly.

2. The authors should support the statement ‘in conducting a focused…’ on the four paragraph with a reference. In addition, the sentence is too long and needs to be revised to make it clearer.

3. I disagree with the authors in their claim that the ‘strong extended family network is now extinct in many African countries’ (paragraph 4, page 3). It is true that the traditional extended family structures are being weakened by continuing poor economic situation in many African countries, but they are not extinct. The authors should revise this statement.

4. The use of the acronym PWA is inappropriate (page 9); a more universally acceptable term for persons living with HIV/AIDS is PLWHA.

5. The statement ‘this review found a paucity of school-based interventions in sub-Saharan Africa relative to the magnitude of the AIDS epidemic’ on page 11
is not correct. There are many school-based intervention projects to prevent HIV/AIDS in many African countries, but there is a paucity of published studies with rigorous evaluation design.

6. The following statements are vague and need to be revised: “future studies should address both these preceding…” page 11, “active training of facilitators…” page 11, ‘future studies could be informed by the results of quantitative studies and discrete …’ page 12

7. The authors should provide an explanation for why behavior change had been difficult to achieve in intervention programs.

8. The authors should double check on information provided under heading for Medline in Table 1. Is the date 1966 mean to be 1986? Please check to be sure.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
None

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: 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 interest