Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of HIV, HSV-2, and Syphilis in Male Sex Partners of Pregnant Women in Peru

Version: 1 Date: 12 November 2007

Reviewer: Anne Buve

Reviewer’s report:

General

The study on which this paper is based is quite original and potentially interesting. However I do have a number of concerns about this paper and I miss quite a bit of information one can expect to find in a paper.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1. The methods section should describe in more detail how the men were approached. Doing a study on male partners of pregnant women may be difficult because men may be difficult to approach and may be reluctant to participate in such study.

2. The methods section should also be explicit on how the research team dealt with men who were found to have syphilis (were they treated?) and men who were found to be HIV infected (were they informed about their HIV status? did they have access to ART?).

3. Again in the methods section, please provide more details on the testing for HIV. What was done in case of discordant results? What was done if the WB was inconclusive?

4. I am not clear about the enrollment (first paragraph of the results section). How many pregnant women were "index" women? For how many pregnant women was there no male partner? How any male partners were approached and how many consented to be in the study?

5. Third paragraph of the results section: please give the numbers of HIV infections (x number out of y number tested). Do the same for syphilis and HSV-2.

6. Fourth paragraph of the results section, second sentence. How did the 5.9% of pregnant women whose partner denied intercourse in the month before conception, become pregnant? Did they have an extramarital partner?

7. Please provide more details on condom use.
8. In the tables please provide all the data not only the OR. I would like to see prevalence of syphilis by age categories, by categories of numbers of partners etc.

9. I suggest not to include in the multivariate analysis "genital ulcers" and history of STD as these are likely consequences of HSV-2 and not risk factors as such.

10. The discussion section focusses on recent high risk behaviour of men. But men could have been infected with HIV or syphilis or HSV-2 years before the study and still pose a risk for their female partner. I am afraid I do not agree that the past risk behaviour of the men is played down so much.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

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: 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'