Reviewer’s report

Title: Effects of a short individually tailored counselling session for HIV prevention in gay and bisexual men receiving Hepatitis B vaccination

Version: 2 Date: 23 February 2009

Reviewer: David L.B. Schwappach

Reviewer’s report:

This is an interesting and well-conducted study. In general, the manuscript is easy to follow and concisely and well-written. I have a number of comments that may help the authors to improve their paper.

Major:

1. I would very much appreciate a simple table with descriptive reports on changes in UAI behavior by control/intervention group. I feel that the index UAI measure is useful for testing the effect of the intervention and for subgroup analysis, but it would be useful to see the real numbers of subjects that changed risk-taking behaviors. This table should provide data on all items that were used for calculating the index measure. The readers will then be able to identify which factors in the UAI index measure actually changed, i.e., whether the intervention affected only insertive or receptive UAI, etc.

2. Please provide results on intervention effects after adjusting for differences between control and interventions subjects, in particular in terms of education and ethnicity.

3. As described on page 7, top, there was selective drop-out in the intervention group but not the control. I therefore would like to see a comparison of the two groups not only at baseline (table 1) but also for only those subjects that completed the study. It may then turn out, that the intervention effect is simply due to this selective drop out?

4. The sample sizes in some cells are very small (e.g., table 3). Did you calculate power for the many subgroup analyses you did? At least, I would mention this issue in the discussion.

5. On page 9, first para, you argue that the observation that controls reported more unsafe behavior at follow-up mirrors general trends towards more unsafe sexual behavior. I think this is a relatively weak argument given the snapshot in time. I wonder about alternative explanations that could be discussed?

6. To this referee, it is a substantial difference if the intervention was successful because controls worsened, or because men in the intervention improved. As tables 3a and 3b show, the effectiveness is mainly based on increases in unsafe behavior in controls. I would appreciate any discussion of this effect.

Minor:

1. P 7, first line. Reads "did attend the vaccination but did fill in...". Shouldn't this
read "bud did NOT fill in"?
2. In my copy, the abstract was missing.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**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.