Reviewer's report

Title: Effect of emergency major abdominal surgery on CD4 cell count among HIV positive patients in a sub Saharan Africa tertiary hospital - a Prospective study

Version: 1 Date: 19 November 2012

Reviewer: Olivia Kituuka

Reviewer's report:

1. The research question is well defined
2. Methods are appropriate although it needs to be clear whether this is a double cohort study
3. The data is sound and has been handled ethically in view of the confidentiality required in the patients' HIV status
4. The data reporting met standard methods of reporting with graphs and tables and statistical testing
5. The discussion is well balanced although it would be enriched with some more literature reviews on the topic. The conclusion was precise but needs to take into consideration the limitations of the study
6. The limitations were clearly stated
7. The authors did not outline any work they are building on or have published in this area of research
8. The title and abstract clearly articulate the study done
9. The writing is acceptable

1. Minor essential revisions
   - this seems like a prospective double cohort study which should be included in the methods
   - the discussion would be enriched with more literature reviews to show the possible or studied effects of surgery on CD4 count and other confounders
   - Data collection and collection needs to be clarified and the period when data was collected i.e. pre-op, 1st post op and 7th post op days noted
   - Consideration for those patients who either died or were discharged before the 7th Pod needed to be mentioned

2. Discretionary revisions
   - One could consider those patients who were HAART sensitized or not
   - The expertise of the surgeon would be of interest as this could be a confounder in duration of surgery and the effect of prolonged surgery on CD4 count
**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests