Reviewer’s report

Title: Preventive health care among HIV-positive women in a Utah HIV/AIDS clinic: A retrospective cohort study

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Reviewer: Amanda E Tanner

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BMC Women’s Health Review
Preventive health care among HIV-positive women in a Utah HIV/AIDS clinic: A retrospective cohort study

Thank you for the opportunity to review your manuscript, ‘Preventive health care among HIV-positive women in a Utah HIV/AIDS clinic: A retrospective cohort study’. The paper addresses an important and relevant topic – preventive health services among HIV-positive women. However, there are some critical issues (detailed below) that need to be addressed before the manuscript could be published. The two most salient issues are: 1) the data are almost 5 years old so the relevance of the information is questionable. Since it is from 2009, can you then look at these women across time (or more recently) to see if the preventive behaviors/services are the same and what are the differences in health outcomes? and 2) the organization and presentation of the information makes the manuscript difficult to navigate. I would recommend a major revision of the information (especially the order and flow of the introduction and discussion), including be careful and thoughtful about the assumptions (and stereotypes) you are making about women being “perceived as high risk” (and define that in the introduction not the discussion) and remove all ‘value’ words (e.g., however) in the results.

Key words
• Fine

Abstract
• The order of background information could be changed
• Is this cross-sectional data?
• Remove the sentence beginning: “Women who might be perceived as…” this is not part of your results
• Define what you mean by “perceived as highest risk” in conclusion

Background
• The organization of the information needs to be cleaned up and transitions added
  o For instance: combine all the STI information and the barriers to care access
literature

The second paragraph seems out of place – consider incorporating some of these statistics into the 3rd section about women’s health needs

• Add/update the references from the first paragraph
• Unclear in goals how this study “elucidate their health needs”

Methods

• The methods suggests that the mammography and colorectal cancer screenings were only considered for a subset of women – please provide the numbers in the text and ensure that the % in the abstract and results reflect these numbers as denominators
• You include the provision of contraceptives in methods but it isn’t mentioned again – please include (especially types – tubal, hormonal, etc)

o This could allow for a more interesting discussion of “provider bias” related to HIV-positive women as mothers

• Analysis

o Appropriate

o Please provide rationale for dichotomizing all the outcome variables

o Define housing status in methods

Results

• Some of the analysis detail can be moved to the methods – help with cleaner presentation of data
• Again remove the value words (e.g., however) – present results as statements
• Change “this was a high-risk group of women” to “The women had a variety of contextual and behavioral risk factors, including…”
• Again make it clear that the mammography & colorectal cancer screening % reflect the subset of women

o In the discussion discuss how these percents are similar/different from HIV-negative women

• Change substance abuse and mental health “problems” to “issues”
• Provide numbers of women who were non-English speaker and provide more details about who the other non-English, non-US citizen women are (e.g., where are they from? Language to they speak?)

Discussion

• Move the second paragraph (In accordance with…) information to the introduction
• Again be careful with assumptions you are perpetuating related to “women who might be perceived as high risk”
  o Especially since you don’t include information/data from providers about how they make their treatment decisions
  o There is a literature around “provider bias” that you should look at
• Organization is a little off here too
  o The paragraph beginning “These findings may be due…” should not be a new paragraph as it is directly referring to the information in the previous paragraph
  o The placement of the paragraph “The women including in this study are clinically…” seems out of place
• The strengths & limitations paragraph should be cleaned up
  o Some clear strengths
  o Need to document and discuss implications of limitations more thoroughly (e.g., old data, what the underestimation bias mean, what other changes may have taken place besides paper to electronic records)
• More about future research needs
Tables
• Fine

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

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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.