Reviewer's report

Title: Preliminary development of a scale to measure stigma relating to sexually transmitted infections among women in a high risk neighbourhood

Version: 2 Date: 22 July 2008

Reviewer: Carol Kaufman

Reviewer's report:

Largely, the authors have addressed the concerns of the first review. I have only minor observations that the authors may want to address in future revisions:

1. The response to the future of the scale I found to be less than satisfying. The authors do suggest it should be tested in a hypothesis-driven manner, but what do the findings from this analysis say to researchers or practitioners? This concern is particularly salient since only 4 covariates were found to have a significant association with the scales. Still, I think something more meaningful could be discussed with respect to the specific findings. Also, since the female-specific moral stigma showed no relationship with individual characteristics, the statement about preconceived notions of ‘bad girl’ membership superseding participation in programs seems unsupported. In other words, one can develop scales that behave nicely as scales, but they may not be useful as an analytic or practitioner tool: They meet conceptualization expectations, but empirically are not supported. Perhaps a fuller address of this issue would make the results of the work more compelling. Is it the power in the sample which produced so many non-findings? What do the significant results that are found imply, both theoretically and methodologically? (Some of this is touched on, e.g., p.15, but only slightly).

2. I strongly recommend the authors reverse-code the scales: Higher scores should mean higher stigma levels.

3. The Table numbers and titles do not appear to be quite accurate:
   a. Table 3 (cont.) on the last page should be Table 4 (cont.),
   b. Some significant finding are in bold, while others are not,
   c. The title for Table 4 still contains the reference to “tribal stigma.”
   d. Please include usual regression stats (n's, R-sq, etc.) on Table 4.
   e. Calculating post-hoc sample power to determine the level of effect possible to detect might provide some useful information for the discussion/conclusions. Related to this, flagging .10 sig levels is not typically perceived as very rigorous, but may be a function of sample power, and in any case likely up to the discretion of the journal editors.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely
related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.