Reviewer's report

Title: Improving understanding of clinical trial procedures among low literacy populations: An intervention within a microbicide trial in Malawi

Version: 2 Date: 17 October 2012

Reviewer: John Appiah-Poku

Reviewer's report:

Minor essential revisions:

1. Results section, subsection under: "Mean and median scores by group before and after the intervention". The impression is given as though the tables show what is being reported rather than the results as shown in the tables revealing ......what is being reported. For example, the second sentence in the paragraph under reference reads: "Table 3 confirms that before the implementation of the intervention..." this could better be presented as: "Our results confirm that before the intervention.... as presented in table 3 above. That paragraph needs to be reworked as suggested.

2. Table 3

   In table 3 the second part: Distribution of scores after the intervention.

   Here under low score 0-49%, the intervention count should read "0" instead of blank

3. In the results section under the ;presentation of LLP7, the third sentence should read: "The way you explained it was as if you were talking about a new study". In that sentence "it" and "as" were missed.

4. Discussion:

   Here the 3rd sentence reads: "Women in both the intervention and non-intervention arms were selected because they had obtained low scores in the initial field test". Do they mean of the original microbicide study or their own study. It is not clear and adding initial field test of the orignal microbicide study would clarify things greatly.

Discretionary revisions:

1. The entire discussion would benefit from a clear statement whether their findings are collaborated by the earlier works which they cite and what the earlier works reported. For example in paragraph 2, line 5 of the discussion section they cite Cornelli et. al. One is left to guess that Cornelli et. al. reported that participants can find information meaningful irrespective of their educational level and that this collaborates their finding also. It would be useful to state this rather than leaving it to the imagination of the reader. I believe it is not enough to cite
earlier works, it is more beneficial to state how their findings relate to your own findings in the discussion.

I suggest that their very good piece of research could be enhanced by more discussion of their findings in relation to earlier works which they cite in support.

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

**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