Reviewer's report

**Title:** I wish I could read on the Internet: the cure for HIV was just discovered: Perceptions of people living with HIV in Peru towards information technology

**Version:** 2  **Date:** 6 June 2007

**Reviewer:** Helene Antoine Claire Marie Voeten

**Reviewer's report:**

**General**

This paper by Curioso et al. reports on a small-scale qualitative study that was done to investigate access, use and perceptions regarding information and communication technologies, as a means for health promotion for people living with HIV in Peru. The study led to a cell-phone delivered HIV intervention in Lima.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

1) The study aims to describe access, use and perceptions regarding Internet, cell-phones and PDAs as a means for health promotion for people living with HIV in Peru. However, this clear structure is missing in the Results and Discussion sections. The results contain one heading, namely “Perceptions of using cell phones”, and the Discussion focuses entirely on the Internet. This is very inconsistent.

I suggest that the Results and Discussion section are re-structured and re-written, so that all three technologies are covered, conform the Interview guide of Table 1 (in the same order as the topics are mentioned in table 1!). For the results I would suggest using 3 headings, namely “Internet”, “Cell-phones” and “PDA’s”. For each of these topics something should be said about access, about use and about perceptions. In the Discussion all 3 technologies need to be discussed. If nobody was found to use PDA’s, this is still a valuable result that should be reported and discussed.

2) You do not describe the sampling procedure in your Methods section, this should be added. It should also be clearly stated if this was a random sample or a convenience sample. In case of the latter, the implications of this for the generalisability of your results should be discussed in the Discussion.

3) I think the title does not cover the contents very well. The paper does not only cover “Perceptions” but “Access, use and perceptions”; and information technology maybe more vague to readers as compared to mentioning “Internet, cell-phones and PDAs”. Also, the quote “I wish I could read on the Internet; the cure for HIV was just discovered” does not cover the message of the paper very well. Finally, the use of two colons does not read easily. I think the title should more closely describe the content of the paper, for example: “Access, use and perceptions regarding Internet, cell-phones and PDAs as a means for health promotion for people living with HIV in Peru.”

4) Page 6, last paragraph: be a bit more specific when trying to summarize your Internet results of table 3. At least you should mention in the text terms like treatment information, misinformation, waste of time/money.

5) End of Discussion section (page 8 below, page 9 top): You only discuss the possibilities for interventions regarding Internet. What are possibilities regarding cell phones and PDAs? You mention partner notification, but this has not been discussed in your paper; please expand how you think information technologies can be used for partners notification.

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

1) Abstract: The Results section in the abstract should mention the main results on all 3 technologies. The Background in the abstract can be shortened.

2) Background page 3, third line; Is there anything known about HIV prevalence of sex workers in Peru?
3) You are not consistently using HAART and ART in your paper. Line 4 on page 3 should say (HAART) instead of (ART), and in the Methods section you mix up HAART and ART. In general, HAART is used to describe triple therapy, ART to describe any antiretroviral therapy including mono and dual therapy. Please choose the appropriate term for your paper and use it consistently.

4) Page 3 about halfway: you mention a study in the US, but there is no reference included.

5) Page 4 about halfway “A qualitative interview topic guide was developed based on a literature review” suggests that you did the review yourself, so please replace by “based on a published review”.

6) Page 7 first line: “A small number of participants 2/31 (6%), both of them MSM, …” please replace by “Two participants (6%), both of them MSM, …”

7) Discussion page 7 last paragraph: “We identified variation in the information behaviors of the groups…” What do you mean? What are the groups, what are the variations?

8) Page 8 second paragraph: “Other researchers have reported…” References are lacking.

9) Page 8 third paragraph: “There are some organisations in Peru that offers…” replace “offers” by “offer”

10) Table 2 and 3: The “PROS” and “CONS” in your tables are not really pros and cons. What you mean is more “Quotes of people having positive experiences” versus “Quotes of people having negative experiences”. In table 2, I would replace the “Technological features that support healthy behaviors” by “Confidentiality”. In table 3, I would replace “nonresponsiveness” by “waste of time/money”.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

1) I would not mention in the abstract that people use information technologies to make social and sexual connections. This refers to 2 people only, and it is not relevant to your research question (i.e. whether the technologies could be used for health promotion).

2) Page 7 below: Are there no official numbers available regarding proportion of the people who have access to Internet, who have a cell phone, etc?

3) Table 1: The structure is not very clear and not always logic. It would have been better if you clearly made a distinction between access, use, and perceptions. But because this is the guide the way you have used it, you cannot change it anymore I guess.

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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.