Reviewer’s report

Title: A global approach to the management of EMR (Electronic Medical Records) of patients with HIV/AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa: the experience of DREAM Software

Version: 2 Date: 1 April 2009

Reviewer: Leana Uys

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Minor essential revisions:

1. The bulleted statements under "What DREAM" is about" needs to be references. Even though a statement such as "low level of access to health services and poor level of health education" seems to be self-evident, it cannot be stated as a fact without some references to substantiate the claim.

2. I am not sure what CCHC and MCPC involves, although the names are given. I do know what PMTCT involves, so I might be showing my ignorance, but it would be useful to just have a sentence indicating what each programme offers.

3. Who owns the central database? Who has access to it and who may use the data for analysis? This is an ethical issue which needs to be clarified.

4. The authors refer to "Western standards" with regard to privacy. What specific code or standards were used? I am not aware of a set of standards that is accepted by the whole Western world.

5. I am not sure whether I understand the inclusion criteria for patients correctly. If all patients living in the catchment area can actually obtain the full range of services, including the medication, surely "Living within a demarcated catchment area" is another inclusion criterion? Formulating it this way would make this clearer, and also be more acceptable ethically. Reading it as it stands makes it look like poor people who did not receive a good education (which would have made them highly skilled) and do not have jobs, are excluded from treatment. Surely this is highly discriminatory. It would be much better if the inclusion is based on these criteria as well as the catchment area.

6. In the results section the authors refer to DREAM software being a "reliable tool", but there is no effort that I could see for measuring the reliability or validity of the data entered. Was that done at all? If not, it might be better to refer to an effective tool.

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.