Reviewer's report

Title: An e-health driven laboratory information system to support HIV treatment in Peru: E-quity for laboratory personnel, health providers and people living with HIV/AIDS

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Reviewer: Eddy J Beck

Reviewer's report:

General points:

This is an interesting paper and it is important to the scientific community to learn of the developments which have taken place in Peru. However, the paper should be more focused - it currently is a mixture of the the development of NETLAB and a description of the software. I would recommend the authors to focus their paper more on the development of the network rather than providing screen-shots of the software. Questions like:

1) what was the impetus of the development of the network in the first place. It is not HIV specific so was the original plan to provide broad-based laborarory results, whihc incorporated HIV, or did they start with HIV and expanded across other disease groups? Which other disease groups are covered?

2) What were some of the political and logistical issues involved with the development of the network? Which were the main problems and how were they overcome.

3) What is current status of the network. How many facilities and what type of facilities are currently linked? Future expansion plans?

4) I see no reference what so ever about existence of local guidelines on protecting the confidentiality & security of HIV and other health information. Do they exist in Peru and if so are they implemented. If they don't exist is someone developing them? Authors may want to consult the recent UNAIDS/PEPFAR guidlines on this


The format of the paper does not really lends itself to the background/methods/results/discussion format. Suggest use different headings.

Specific points:

Abstract : what is meant by: "received the mandate to carry out testing to monitor the effectiveness of HAART"

The needs assessment is not of the 'public health laboratory system' but of the people who work in the laboratories and provide and use health services.
Background: p3 - 0.5 percent [0.3%–0.6%]- what is between the []? 95%CIs or IQR?

Stop using 'HIV/AID' - now referred to 'HIV' unless on specifically also wants to refer to AIDS. Also when refereing to people living with HIV, abbreviation used is now PLHIV.

What is meant with: "to carry out periodic testing to monitor the effectiveness of HAART" - who is being tested for what?

Methods:

p5 - What was the function of the surveys and how were informants selected and surveyed?

Results:

p7 - how is access to the site and data regulated? See comments above on confidentiality and security of HIV infromation.

p8 Details of the screen too detailed for a more general paper.

p11 Authors should familiarize themself with some of the work being done in Africa, through the development of Open MRS and other related projects in the same area of work.

Concusion

p13: link on the page did not lead to a web-site.

Figures 2-5 should be dropped.

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