Reviewer's report

Title: Knowledge and practice of prevention of vertical transmission of HIV among Nurse/midwives in Owerri, Imo State Nigeria

Version: Date: 13 March 2007

Reviewer: William Holzemer

Reviewer's report:

This manuscript addresses an important topic in HIV prevention, particular nurses' knowledge about PMTCT transmission. The article is well developed but needs significant revisions before it is ready for publication.

Major compulsory revisions:

1. There is no discussion of the instrument(s) used to measure knowledge and practice. There is no data on the number of items, instrument validity or reliability, and why 50% of the knowledge is considered average or modest. If one writes a difficult test, 50% could be an extremely high score. There is no way to interpret the meaning of the knowledge or practice test results.

2. There is a conceptual confusion among the terms knowledge, practice, skills, attitudes, and behaviors. It seems like this article would be better served to talk about it being a KAB study or knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors/skills. After reading the manuscript this author is a bit confused about the meaning of practice as used in the title and the document itself.

3. Sampling. It is not clear if these were all of the nurses at these three sites (50% of them) or were they all working in OB/GYN nurses. Are they all midwives? The article requires a much better description of the settings, the sampling procedure, the background of the respondents, protection of human subjects, rights of refusal, etc.

4. The entire section on Theory p. 2 and Figure 1 do not appear to be well integrated into the manuscript and might be dropped. Seems to this reader that the theory of this assessment of nurses comes from Bloom’s taxonomy of learning and focused upon knowledge, attitudes, and skills.

5. I would consider dropping all of the figures as they do not seem to add any additional information to the findings. All this data is or could be simply put into the text itself.

6. The summary and conclusions mentioned that five specific objectives were generated…. but it is unclear what these were and how they relate to this study. 5 objectives for what???

7. Demographic variables – why not just report the average age, SD, and range. What is the purpose of the categories? It seems that no analyses were conducted by demographic variables. Are there any differences in knowledge or skills by level of education? Age? Professional qualification? Type of position? Years of experience? (why not again give just a mean?), and years of experience in ob/gyn? (again why not just a mean). I wonder from these high years in ob/gyn if all of these nurses are working in ob/gyn?

8. Table 3 presents some of the results from the knowledge test. It is impossible to understand this table without knowing the number of items on the test, perhaps doing a Kuder-Richardson reliability estimate of this knowledge test, how was it constructed? Etc. Evidence of validity and reliability as mentioned above is missing. Why present just these few items?

9. Table 4. This table can not be interpreted without knowing the stem question. What does always, etc. mean when discussing VCT? Obtaining consent (for what?), etc. More details are required on this instrument, number of items, how it was constructed, perhaps calculating a Cronbach alpha reliability estimate?
10. Table 5 factors that influence policy do not seem to be related to the study question of assessing the nurses' knowledge, attitudes, and skills. How does this relate? This information needs to be further developed to be included in the manuscript.

11. It is not clear to this read how experience is measured in Table 8 – years of experience? How was availability of resources scored for Table 9? The article needs to have a strong section on the instruments used, what they measured, how they were scored, validity, and reliability, etc.

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**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:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**

NO