Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 16 April 2007

Reviewer: Leonardo Palombi

Reviewer's report:

General
The article appears to be of noteworthy interest and gathers aspects of public health and about personnel involved in the control of HIV/AIDS infection that make it suitable for publication. However, more extensive amendments must be made. These amendments could potentially condition some of the results and conclusions of the Authors.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. The method of selection of participants in the survey must be clarified: in the text, it would seem that the proposal was advanced with regard to a randomized sample of personnel employed for at least a year in the maternity units of three selected hospitals. It is not clear how many of the randomized interviewees refused. The lack of this vital piece of information means that the existence of a serious selection bias cannot be ascertained.
2. It is not clear what percentage the sample of 155 interviewees represents on the overall personnel employed. The lack of this vital piece of information makes it impossible to deduce how representative the study really is. It would be opportune to draw up a table that lists:
   a. The total of personnel
   b. The randomized number
   c. The number of respondents and that of those who refused
   d. The final number as a percentage of the total of personnel
3. The questionnaire has not been produced, other than indirectly through tables and figures. The modality of calculation of total points and averages is not clear.
4. Table 4 is not comprehensible and requires more extensive changes:
   a. The first line has no reference
   b. The final totals of the column do not correspond to the baseline values reported and it is not possible to deduce the method of calculation
5. Table 5 presents similar problems
6. More in general, the calculation of averages worked out, which has been used to evaluate the final result, does not seem necessary since the response baseline rates give a clear indication about the overall outcome of the responses.
7. The article records in detail only those responses in the field of the physiopathology of HIV/AIDS infection. It would be rather opportune to record in a table knowledge pertaining to the field of vertical transmission, which is after all what is really pertinent to the work undertaken by those interviewed.
8. Since the “practices” implemented by the nurses do not depend solely on their knowledge but also on the effective availability of necessary equipment, as the authors rightly noted, evaluation of the responses appears to be problematic. Thus it would be useful to break down the questions whose answers are influenced by the effective availability of materials or by hospital policy.
9. Tables 6 and 9 report the result of a regression but the calculation method used is not recorded. Moreover, the indispensable numbers at the basis of calculations were not recorded.

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

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
As far as the rest is concerned, the only observation to be made is that the discussion appears to be consequential to the elements described in the section relative to the results and in the tables. However, it could be streamlined, especially in part of the conclusions where there are some repetitions.
**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 importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests