Reviewer's report

Title: Promising outcomes of a national programme for the prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission; impact of policy changes?: A retrospective study

Version: 1 Date: 22 April 2010

Reviewer: Belinda Udeh

Reviewer's report:

This is an article of great importance not only due to the importance of the topic, but the importance of highlighting changes in policy and strategies and the challenges in reaching the desired goals of these changes. I would recommend this article for publication contingent upon some revisions.

Minor essential Revisions

1/ The paper would benefit from an English edit especially in the correction of a few awkward phrasing areas, grammatical mistakes and superfluous words
2/ The statement on line 2 of the background section needs to be carefully considered and reworded given its current ongoing debate.
3/ In the background, consider stating clearly the the PMTCT guideline changes for each relevant time period when the came into effect, especially the changes that came in to effect in 2008.
4/ In the discussion, expand on reasons why a/ ARV prophylaxis is so low for mothers and infants, b/ follow up for child HIV testing is so low c/ why partner testing is so low. If possible, suggest how these barriers may be overcome
5/ Paper would benefit from a limitations section
6/ Edit the discussion section to improve flow and readability

Discretionary Revisions

1/ Eliminate Figure 4. Not sure it adds any value to the paper
2/ Consider discussing any results for existing ANC clients as compared to new ANC clients. Possible comparisons may include: (a) are existing ANC clients still offered screening for repeat pregnancies (b)how do their screening/counseling rates compare to new clients? (c)are they or their infants more/less likely to receive ARV (d) are they more/less likely to have their partner tested (e)are they more/less likely to have their child tested for HIV (f)how does the prevalence of HIV compare between new and existing ANC clients? (g) Is there any protocol for treating known HIV positive clients who present to the ANC clinic?

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