Reviewer’s report

Title: Experiences of care and support among people living with HIV in Viet Nam

Version: 1 Date: 13 September 2011

Reviewer: Theodore Hammett

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Major compulsory revisions

1. The quantitative survey was conducted in 2004, 7 years ago. The findings are likely to be seriously out-of-date as there have been many changes in Vietnam since then, not the least of which has been implementation of the PEPFAR program, several large Global Fund projects, a number of other large donor-funded projects, and increased support for HIV/AIDS programs from the Vietnamese national budget. For this reason, I suggest dropping the material from the quantitative survey except insofar as it can be used to demonstrate changes (or continuities) during the period since it was conducted. In any case, the authors have already reported the findings from this survey in an earlier paper.

2. The qualitative interviews have some rich findings, particularly on stigma and discrimination and the key roles of families, but it is difficult in the results section to disentangle what findings come from the 2004 quantitative survey and which are from the 2007 qualitative interviews.

3. The sampling procedures are not clearly presented for the qualitative interviews, nor are the participants categorized by key variables such as MARP status. Since many were recruited through peer educators, presumably there are numerous IDUs and others in MARPs but the breakdown is not provided.

4. The qualitative analysis is not adequately described. For example, was any software used for this analysis?

5. A limitation that should be addressed is that the qualitative interviews were done in only one province, Hai Phong.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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'