Reviewer’s report

Title: ‘They have exposed us so much’. Experiences of stigma among women living with HIV attending SRH services in Kenya: a qualitative study

Version: 1 Date: 18 November 2013

Reviewer: Carolyn Audet

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Methods
1. How many participants were approached to participate? Of those who were approached how many were eligible? What were the reasons people declined?
2. Were participants approached to participate at the clinic or at their homes?
3. In the parent study, what was the acceptance rate?
4. Which authors conducted the qualitative data analysis? If more than two people, were they compared for reliability?

Results
1. In the section on the effects of stigma on women's lives, I believe the structure is a bit off. The authors have focused on three things: disclosure of status, breastfeeding practices, and ARV use. However, it seems like disclosure is the overarching theme weaving into breastfeeding and ARV (and in this case, it wasn't really much of an issue). I would suggest focusing this section primarily on breastfeeding and possibly on how women manage to fool friends into thinking they are breastfeeding even if they are not and the importance of counseling / lack of counseling around this issue.

2. The section on health information and support networks and reduction of perceived stigma is weak. I can see that some of the examples give people strength to continue on and to feel better, but not that perceived stigma is reduced. This area has potential but I think it needs a bit of work.

Discussion
1. This research is not well integrated into the literature, particularly in the first few paragraphs. There are a number of studies that should be cited and compared

2. The conclusion that perceived stigma doesn't adversely affect their drug adherence should be taken in the context of this population - a group already attending clinical services. Perhaps it affects people who didn't participate or those who don't come for ANC services at all... this goes back my methods question.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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