Reviewer's report

Title: Dissatisfaction with the Laboratory Services among Public and Private Medical Personnel in Tanzania

Version: 1 Date: 23 December 2007

Reviewer: Ole Norheim

Reviewer's report:

The aim of this study was to determine whether medical personnel are satisfied or not with HIV and HIV related laboratory services provided by public and private laboratories in Tanzania. The topic is important and of relevance for readers of this journal. The study is, to my knowledge, the first of its kind in Tanzania. The study seems to be well planned and conducted, but the reporting can be improved.

I have the following suggestions for improvement.

Major compulsory revisions

1. Title, abstract and introduction (first paragraph) should reflect the fact that this is not a general study of all laboratory services. Only laboratories qualified to conduct HIV related testing were included. This is important for the generalisability of the results.

2. Introduction. Why a focus only on HIV related laboratories?

3. Method: Were self-administered or interview administered questionnaires used? The description "semi open ended standard questionnaire" is meaningless. Must be clarified. The tables report as if standardised indicators were chosen. More info on questionnaire is also needed. How was satisfaction measured, on a scale or dichotomised. Were indifferent responses allowed?

4. Methods: Nurses, physicians, lab personnel were included. Random selection? Did all asked accept to be included? Response rate? There should also be a new table 1 with all baseline information about respondents according to sex, age, profession, and employment (public/private).

5. Method: Randomisation method in the selection of laboratories?

6. Ethics: Informed, written or oral consent?

7. Results: Add response rate. Add new table 1 with baseline info on informants. Defined "Clear Complete Results" earlier in the paper.

8. Discussion: I miss comparisons with similar studies in (East-) Africa. There should also be a paragraph on "Strength and limitations of the study". I miss a more critical attitude to the results. Are the findings valid and reliable? There are several sources of bias in this study that have not been discussed. How where these dealt with?
Minor revisions

9. The text says that personnel working with public laboratories were over 3 times more than four. The table and abstract says four. clarify inconsistency.

10. Reference list. OK. But try to identify similar studies in (East-) Africa.

Language and grammar need some improvement. But all in all a very interesting and important study that deserves publication after revision.

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: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests