Reviewer's report

Title: Cost and outputs of HIV prevention programs for truck drivers in Andhra Pradesh, India

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Reviewer: Lorna Guinness

Reviewer's report:

The paper describes the calculation of the total and unit costs of 6 trucker programmes in AP. This fills an important gap in the evidence base on the costs of HIV prevention programmes in India. The data are a subset of a larger dataset looking at a range of prevention activities in Andhra Pradesh which have recently been published in AIDS. It is therefore imperative that the data here provide greater insight into the costs and outputs of trucker interventions. However, I feel this paper does little beyond reporting the results. I have five key issues regarding this paper that I feel need to be addressed before a publication decision can be made:

(1) The written objective of the paper is to assess outputs, costs and efficiency. Yet the reason for doing so is not made clear – why is this important for policy/decision-making? There is also no discussion around what constitutes an output – yes they are defined for this context but not what this means in terms of production. Importantly efficiency is not defined.

(2) There is no discussion around the limitations of the data – specifically the output data which is dependent on routine monitoring systems and is subject to mis-reporting.

(3) Two graphs are presented showing an interesting relationship between unit cost and scale. I would like to see a discussion around these and the authors' interpretations. And again the definitions of scale are not clearly defined.

(4) What do “contact” and “truckers served” mean? I know that this is difficult to define but therein lies the need to explain and discuss the limitations. In particular how was the number of truckers served obtained.

(5) The annualisation techniques used are not standard. For the standard methodology please see:


Finally, I was not entirely sure about the comparison with FSW interventions in the discussion. In terms of contacts, I think the nature of contacts is somewhat different between FSW and trucker interventions (or at least were designed to be
- after all FSW are notoriously difficult to reach and build trust with). As for condom distribution, surely truckers needs for condoms are very different to FSWs. Wouldn't it be better to think through how many condoms a trucker might need in a year - isn't there data in India (national behavioural surveillance surveys) on how many sex acts a trucker is likely to have in a month?

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

**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