Reviewer’s report

Title: Association of Khat and alcohol use with HIV infection and age at first sexual initiation among youths in Gamo-Gofa Zone, South west Ethiopia

Version: 4 Date: 18 December 2012

Reviewer: Bavon Mupenda

Reviewer’s report:

1 Major Compulsory Revisions

The authors should say in their title that this study is related to youth visiting HIV Testing and Counseling Centers

The authors need to update data about psychoactive drugs that are believed to alter one's mood, etc.

Assuming the prevalence of substance abuse among HIV seropositive people to be 41% need to be justified

Table 2 on Sexual and non sexual behaviors of youth needs to be divided in Cases and controls like other tables

2 Minor Essential Revisions

Presenting portions of cases and portions of controls confuse the reader.

Example: Results, paragraph 1, line 2: 18.8% of cases would mean 18.8% of 105, which are the cases. This is throughout the results section.

Arguments to support data in discussion section sometimes go beyond data decrease in early marriage, effect of alcohol are not based on evidence. Casual sex with the married is just an assumption without evidence.

Saying that results are in line with others and giving reference doesn’t say how similar this is or not. (page 11, paragraph 2 and paragraph 3

The language is a bit poor. The writing also is a bit poor.

Examples:

In the abstract, there are things to be corrected: How can one combine HIV/AIDS and substance abuse? (See Background, line 2). In Results, line 1, the authors say: A total of 405... were actively participated... This needs to be changed.

References are not consistently written: some references have no space between elements. The type of referencing (I believe APA) is not the same all over the document. Titles not underlined or italicized, capitalization not well respected, etc. Authors need to let the text proofread by natives of English or other language professionals

The text has no pages.
3 Discretionary Revisions

The background would be better ended by the research question.

Results should be well written: correct use of parentheses (in the text, opening parenthesis needs a space before)

Saying “The most frequent occupation was student” is a bit blur. How frequent was student?

There is too much use of past tense when not appropriate.

**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