Reviewer’s report

Title: Falling through the cracks: a qualitative study of HIV risks among women who use drugs and alcohol in Northeast India

Version: 1 Date: 13 October 2012

Reviewer: RAVI VERMA

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Minor Compulsory Revisions

In methodology, please provide some ideas on broad themes covered in FGDs, and In-depth interviews and KII. Was there any difference in the type of data collected from these different methods?

In methodology, please provide some ideas on broad themes covered in FGDs, and In-depth interviews of KII. Was there any difference in the type of data collected from these different methods? Were the age groups mixed for FGDs? It seems that study covered a wide range of age group and it might have been useful to divide the focus groups according to the broad age categories—young and old.

The average age of the respondents is very high. Is alcohol use -- and dependence --- likely to be an age dependent phenomena? If yes then authors must discuss the implications of ‘age’ in the study and mention it as one of the limitations.

In analysis authors mention "when undertaking the data analysis and reporting the findings, the subjective perspectives of the female drug and alcohol users were privileged over those of the KIs”. It is not clear what do authors mean by this? If this was the case why were other data collected? Comments from authors will be appreciated.

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:

No competing interest