Reviewer’s report

Title: Can HIV testing campaigns expand access and protect individual rights? Provider and client perspectives on the ethics of campaigns in Burkina Faso

Version: 2 Date: 16 June 2014

Reviewer: David Lubogo

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions-

In the materials and methods section, please provide details of the sampling procedure and data collection procedure. Information on how you recruited/selected the respondents of the FGD and IDI seems to be missing. You indicated that ‘data were collected in Burkina Faso during the national information and testing campaign in December 2008’. However, it’s not clear how you recruited/selected the group that ‘tested outside campaigns’. Please provide a description of how you catered for the validity of the data collected. Provide a description of the issues covered in the Focus Group Discussion and In-depth Interview guide.

This study looked at the issue of protection of ‘individual rights’ during HIV testing campaigns from the perspective of the ‘providers’ and ‘clients’, amongst other things. Although the definition of ‘individual rights’ was hinted upon in paragraph five of the Introduction, as ‘confidentiality, consent and quality of care’ (line 97, 98), it later becomes unclear what these ‘rights’ are.

The authors need to clearly state what they mean by individual rights as used in this study, and be consistent in the use in the write up. Do they also apply to the ‘3 Cs’: Counseling, Confidentiality and Consent (line 50, 51) or the ‘5 Cs’: Consent, Confidentiality, Counseling, Correct test results and Connection/linkage to prevention, care and treatment (line 74, 75) and as discussed in the last paragraph of the discussion section (line 483 to 496)?

In the results section, please provide a description of the respondents who participated in the FGD. The results on the first theme ‘why campaigns are attractive’ were well presented with the appropriate quotations from the respondents. However, I suggest you present the quotations in italics. Regarding the themes; ‘providers and clients perspectives on testing conditions during campaigns, ‘confidentiality’, and accessibility vs. individual rights’ I suggest you use a similar format of reporting the results as in the first theme, where by you provide at least some supportive quotations from the respondents.

You seem to interpret and discuss your results (lines 367 to 374), and lines 378 to 382. Correct this.

In the last paragraph of the discussion, starting from line 483, the authors suggest that accessibility and attractiveness should have been included in the
WHO’s guidelines focused on the five ‘Cs’. In my opinion, the ‘3Cs’ and ‘5Cs’ are norms to safeguard or protect the client during their interactions with the service providers and ensure continuity of care. It would seem inappropriate to include accessibility and attractiveness with the ‘5Cs’ as suggested in your discussion and conclusions.

I suggest the authors include limitations encountered during the conduct of their study.

Minor Essential Revisions-

In the Title, The issue of ‘HIV testing campaigns expanding access’ to HIV testing seems to have been addressed in a previous study, entitled ‘Campaigns for HIV testing, an effective strategy for universal access to prevention and treatment? The experience of Burkina Faso’, by the same authors of this manuscript (Also see Introduction section, paragraph 7 in the manuscript (line 119). Is it the case that the authors decided to conduct a qualitative study on a question already addressed? Otherwise, I suggest that the authors present the aspects of access that they wish to address in this paper clearly.

The background to the abstract seems to suggest that the individual right addressed in this study is confidentiality (lines 20, 21). I suggest you mention the individual rights addressed in this study to help the reader appreciate the results indicated in the abstract. The results presented should be seen to address the research question/objectives of the study.

In the introduction, paragraph three, the authors seem to imply that ‘referral’ is among the ‘3Cs’ (line 79, 80, 81) and yet ‘referral’ is in the ‘5Cs’. This needs to be corrected.

Some terms need to be defined clearly in the manuscript including: ‘in-depth individual’ (line 23); ‘during and outside campaigns’ (line 24, 144); individual autonomy (line 95, 130); non-testers (line 137). Are non-testers also part of the clients?; users and non-users (line 140, 141).

In the methods section, the composition of the focus groups needs to be stated in terms of number per FGD. Was it not necessary to make the FGD’s homogenous by sex and age? How did you consider using six FGDs? It’s not clear when you say ‘focus group discussions with users and non-users. (line 140, 141).’ Users’ of what?

In the results section, the information in lines 265 to 271 concerning the five steps of a testing itinerary seems misplaced in the result section. Isn’t this introductory/background information?

Under the theme ‘Accessibility vs. Individual rights’ the information presented in lines 343 to 349 seems to be in line with the first theme ‘why campaigns are attractive’.

Discussion section: The authors reported in the discussion section that ‘a key finding of the study is the perception that high attendance during campaigns helps protect individual rights to confidentiality’ (line 408 and 409). The basis for
this conclusion needs to be highlighted in the results.
The basis for the statement.’..in Burkina Faso clients prefer getting post-test counseling alone to keep their status secret in case they might be HIV-positive, and they feel unwelcome pressure to share their status outside the testing site’ line 440 to 442,is not indicated or presented in your result section.

Discretionary Revisions -None

**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