Reviewer’s report

Title: Male circumcision for HIV prevention: research incorporating science, faith and culture in Papua New Guinea.

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Reviewer: Betty Lovai

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Male circumcision for HIV prevention: research incorporating science, faith and culture in Papua New Guinea.

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Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Abstract
Research question and the objective(s) of the study should be included in the abstract.
There is no mention of the study sample to make sense of the responses reported.

2. Research Question
In the background section, in the first paragraph reference is made to the research question “What can be learnt about male circumcision with a cohort of staff and students”

Under METHOD in the first paragraph the purpose of the study is stated. The objectives of the study are outlined in the second paragraph. In the third paragraph what is termed as specific research questions of interest to the research team are outlined.

Clearly link the research question with the study objectives.

3. Research Methods
The methods used in the study are appropriate but they were not well described.
There are no justifications provided for selecting the methods for the study.

The distinction between the methods and the process used to answer the research question is not clearly shown.

4. Study Sample
There is no description of the study population and the study sample.
5. Results

Description of the Response rate is provided but responses to questions in the questionnaire is limited to circumcision and forms of cuts.
The discussion centered on the research process. No indication of the cultural background of the participants. Which cultures were represented in the study?

6. Research Process

The main focus of the paper is on the process of the study. There are appropriate words that should have been used in the paper (eg. consultation, dissemination, collaborative research & research assistants). The term partnership should not apply to student leaders. They were more or less research assistants.

The considerations taken in this study is standard for other social research of sensitive nature in the country. What is new and how is it different?

7. Title

The title suggests two main components to the study: Male circumcision for HIV Prevention and how the research incorporated science, faith and culture in PNG. The content of the paper is more towards the latter component of the title. Is it possible to change the title so it reflects the content of the paper?

8. Inform Multi-site Study

The study tested the research processes to inform a multi-site study of the acceptability of male circumcision for HIV prevention in PNG.
There is no guideline or recommendation (s) based on the pilot project to inform a multi site study.

9. Content of the Paper

The link between the research question and the content of paper is not clear. Use of appropriate vocabulary is critical to describe the research process (see point 6 above).

Minor Essential Revisions

1. Self –administered questionnaire

Under Abstract and under the Methods section clearly state who were expected to complete the questionnaire. Did male and female participants complete the same questionnaire? The first sentence under methods is not very clear.

2. Profile of the participants

Provide the total number of participants by gender and the regional Representation
3. Introduction of the content of the paper

Insert a statement to provide the outline of the paper before the discussion on the background.

4. Reference

Confirm with Review for Health Research Policy and System the correct way of referencing

5. The Section on HIV in PNG

The first two sentences should be supported with reference or source of information.

In the first sentence the word potential is used. Avoid using the word. The sentence should read Investigating new ways of preventing......

The fourth sentence in the same paragraph the phrase ‘low circumcision rates’ has not been confirmed as one of the factors in PNG because little is known about circumcision and HIV in PNG and more studies are need to support that argument.

The sixth sentence should begin with, The health delivery system is poorly managed .... The system is not weak but has been managed poorly.

6. Section on Partnering in Research

Under paragraph 3 and elsewhere in the paper do not use initials of the researchers. It is not a standard of writing research papers.

7. Section on Method

On line 3 delete the word successful.

Under paragraph 3, the first sentence delete ‘to the team’ after interest and before included.

Under paragraph 4 delete TM. In second sentence delete the word intentionally after were & before involved. The third sentence, delete all after were & before led

8. Working with student leaders

First sentence, delete the phrase made up of collections of neigbouring provinces.

Second paragraph – partner is the incorrect word to describe the involvement of student leaders in the study. A technical term is research assistants.

9. Section on Data Collection

First sentence, provide details on the voluntary optional clinic examination

Sixth sentence, what is purposive sampling technique?
10. Section on Results

What was the criteria used for selecting participants for semi structured interviews and focus group discussions?

Last paragraph and the last sentence – Table 1 should be replaced with appendix 1. It’s a Table when in the main body of the paper.

11. Capacity Building for research

Last paragraph, second sentence what are the alternative ways that were discovered?

Discretionary Revision

‘PAU researchers of the pilot study were influential, well respected senior lecturers…..at the university’. Don’t you think the influence of the researchers determined the outcome?

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

Quality of written English: Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

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