Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 2 Date: 30 August 2013

Reviewer: Jan E Ritchie

Reviewer’s report:

The authors have spent time carefully to rework the original paper to a manuscript that now follows the suggestions of both the other reviewer and me. The paper now aims effectively to trace the process of this pilot research study rather than reporting on the research results. As such it will clearly be of value to readers who are working in similar cross-cultural situations.

I recommend a few further improvements that will refine and enhance the content material, as follows:

1. Essential: The authors show difficulty in matching this Journal’s conventional research report sub-headings to their content now they have adjusted the paper to cover the series of process steps. I suggest they change the sub-heading ‘Method’ to ‘Process’ as this section is the central intent of the paper and is detailed with not only what happened but also includes author perceptions. However to do this I suggest they seek specific permission from the Journal editors to digress from conventional headings. In addition the material covered in ‘Results’ still echoes the original intention to report on the findings, which is now changed. Since this section is providing input from student leaders who have been asked to give their opinions of the study’s feasibility, I would suggest the authors delete the sub-heading ‘Results’ and just allow this content to continue under ‘Process’. If these changes are instigated the Abstract must be reworded similarly.

2. Discretionary: The authors take unusual pains to overtly identify many aspects of the university where the pilot study took place. It is more usual to avoid identifying anything or anybody in a study where anonymity and confidentiality are paramount and I see no reason for them to do more than refer to this university in more generic terms (even if it will be obvious to anyone searching for specifics to discover the study site through checking author affiliation details). All direct reference to PAU should be changed throughout. Similarly I would suggest removing PAU’s name in the keywords and acknowledgements and not naming DWU or its campus site. However it is usual to specifically identify the bodies providing ethics clearance so no change is recommended in that sentence.

3. Discretionary: Again the authors take the unusual step of specifically clarifying the role of each identified research team member in the sequence of process steps, through attaching their initials to the various actions within the process.
Since this article is written for international readers as well as those in PNG, the specific initials are of less value in understanding the process than identifying whether team members undertaking various tasks are in-country researchers or visiting researchers or from both sides of the collaborative team. I would suggest this modification be attended to throughout.

4. Discretionary: I suggest the term ‘research process’ be added to the keywords.


6. Discretionary: Finally the title now needs to clearly indicate that the paper traces a process – can the word ‘process’ be included?

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

None