Reviewer's report

Title: Cascaded analysis of PMTCT service cascade in Ethiopia: 2006-2010

Version: 1 Date: 3 February 2011

Reviewer: Hapsatou Touré

Reviewer's report:

Reviewer's report: Many thanks for giving me the chance to review your article. Overall, this is an interesting and important paper providing needed operational research findings of Ethiopia’s experience in implementing PMTCT services nationally. The paper uses program data to providing a deep insight into the PMTCT program in Ethiopia. I have suggested a few revisions/clarifications towards strengthening the reporting and interpretation of the findings.

Major essential revisions

1. The second part of the objective – to predict the whereabouts of key PMTCT indicators at critical future points – is not address in the paper I think. The only “future” point discussed is in page 7, where it is stated “Based on the trend-line equation, 100% coverage in counseling can be achieved in 2011 (Fig 4)”. We have to trust the authors as the percentage for 2011 is not marked in Fig 4. Can we have

2. The 2010 universal access report has been released. The figures provided in the second paragraph of the introduction need to be updated.

3. Fourth paragraph of introduction page 2 does not have sense to me.

4. The discussion seems too short to me: As we know the completeness and accuracy of secondary collected data can be challenging (see: Mate, Bennett and al, Challenges for Routine Health System Data Management in a Large Public Programme to Prevent Mother-to-Child HIV Transmission in South Africa, PlosMed, 2009). Need a little more discussion on the quality of the data the report relies on? The paper discuss the use of the opt-out strategy without mentioning what it refers to or when the strategy was implemented in (2006, during the study period, before?)

Minor essential revisions

1. Why having two times “cascade” in the title?

2. Page 3: This study was conducted in January 2011. I would rather say the analysis were performed in January 2011 (the study period being 2006-2010) --- or do not mention it at all

3. Results, Potential PMTCT service coverage, page 6: holds key information, but would be more useful if percentages are added in the first paragraph.

4. The writing needs improvement both for clarity and to correct typing errors. A
non-exhaustive list is offered below:

• Second line, fifth paragraph page 2: In 2010[space] five …
• Page 3, Methods, study area and period, second line of paragraph: double “in”
• Page 3: The HIV epidemic in the country is generalized but …. 
• Results, antenatal coverage, page 6: replace haven’t by have not. Same paragraph, line 7: “equation [double space] displayed”
• HIV counseling at PMTCT sites: replace haven’t been first paragraph page 7 by have not been
• Numerous didn’t to be replaced by did not
• Please be consistent and chose between HIV+ or HIV-positive
• Words starting with capitals with no reason:
  o Table 1, page 4, description of indicator 3: Health facilities, Fiscal year
  o page 7: top of page (HIV Counseling at PMTCT sites), last paragraph (HIV Prevalence)
  o page 10, discussion, second paragraph: at Non-PMTCT sites

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

**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.