Reviewer's report

Title: SMS and phone call: method used to motivate the presence appointment of children infected or exposed to HIV, study protocol for a multisite factorial randomized controlled trial (SMS-Call Children)

Version: 3 Date: 14 July 2013

Reviewer: Tobias Freund

Reviewer's report:

Jean Joel Bigna Rim and colleagues report on the protocol of a randomized controlled trial to motivate the presence appointment of children infected or exposed to HIV. The topic is of interest as regular monitoring of HIV treatment is an essential prerequisite of its success. However, the protocol needs substantial improvement before possibly being considered for publication in Trials. Most importantly language and style needs substantial improvement. Some minor aspects are:

- Please clarify sentence 1 in the background section: Which area does the number of 330,000 infected children refer to (the World? whole Africa?)?
- Please write the full term before introducing abbreviations the first time (e.g. ART)
- Last sentence of second para in Method and Design is redundant and should be deleted (1:1:1:1 ratio..)
- Please clarify how costs will be assessed in your study. "using a prepaid plan" is not clear to me. Do you attempt to measure working time + expenses for phone call / SMS +/- doctors time "wasted for no-shows"?
- Discussion: Please clarify what advantage the manual SMS method has if compared to automatic SMS
- Please include "Trial Status" in your manuscript detailing the status of your trial at time of submission

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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:

No conflict of interest.