Reviewer's report

Title: Male participation in prevention programmes of mother to child transmission of HIV: A protocol for a systematic review to identify barriers, facilitators and reported interventions

Version: 1 Date: 21 November 2011

Reviewer: Margaret Maglione

Reviewer's report:

The authors present a well thought out protocol on an important topic. However, some clarifications are needed before the protocol is published.

Abstract
1. The primary and secondary outcomes to be abstracted should be listed here if word count permits.

Methods
1. Although I’ve been involved in systematic reviews about a dozen years, I’m not familiar with Saddler’s 2008 guidelines for methodological quality of observational studies. I was unable to access a copy of the cited article, as my institution does not subscribe to the journal Gastroenterology Nursing. This instrument’s items are listed in the appendix to the protocol, but I would like more information on its validity and reliability. Also, is the instrument in widespread use in systematic reviews? Why was this instrument selected over others available?
2. The authors plan to include studies from any geographic area. Are studies from developed nations applicable to this project? Please describe how applicability will be assessed.
3. I’m confused about the study inclusion criteria. The protocol states that the title, aims, or outcome should portray a male effect on female uptake of PMTCT services. However, if this is a requirement for inclusion, it seems you will miss some studies that report your secondary outcomes of interest. For example, men’s knowledge of / approval of PMTCT could be assessed by surveys or interviews that don’t include any actual PMTCT service use questions or data. Do you actually mean to include studies where outcomes could possibly (theoretically) affect female uptake of services, regardless of whether uptake data is reported?
4. Does the current protocol refer only to the systematic review, or does it include the development of the SAMP PMTCT instrument? If the latter, more detail is needed. For example, will validity and reliability testing be conducted as part of this project? Or will that occur in a future project?

Minor necessary revisions.

5. The protocol needs minor editing throughout. For example, the phrase “experts on the field” should be changed to “experts in the field” and “couple
counseling” should be changed to “couples counseling.”

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.