Reviewer’s report

Title: What determines health-related quality of life among people living with HIV? An updated review of the literature and practical recommendations.

Version: 1 Date: 18 February 2014

Reviewer: Ward Schrooten

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Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. In the results sections several (if not most) variables had contradictory effects when comparing different studies. “Concluding from this review, socio-economic status, immunological status, presence of symptoms, (psychiatric) comorbidity, social support and adherence to HAART showed to be the main determinants of HRQoL in PLWH. “ as a discussion is too straightforward and lacks nuance.

2. It is remarkable that fear/anxiety did not come up as a separate variable in the results section, as anxiety among HIV infected individuals could be an important factor determining quality of life. At least this should be explained in the discussion section.

3. The limitations of the instruments used should be discussed. Are any new variables currently being studied which could complement these instruments? For example, the concept of resilience could be discussed (e.g. Motivation, Management, and Mastery: A Theory of Resilience in the Context of HIV Infection Joseph P. De Santis, Aubrey Florom-Smith, Amber Vermeesch, Susana Barroso and Diego A. DeLeon Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association 2013 19: 36)

4. In the discussion section it would be interesting to put the findings in a wider context, comparing with studies done in other diseases such as cancer.

5. An attempt is made to translate the findings into recommendations. It is not clear how these recommendations follow from the findings in this study (it rather feels these recommendations were forced into the discussion section). In any way the practical recommendations are described too briefly to provide any insight, or even to be announced in the title of the paper.

Minor Essential Revisions:

Typing errors:
1. Page 5, last paragraph: “...did not found an (independent) ...

2. Page 6, first paragraph: “However, physical health improves more in patients in whom HAART was started at CD4 <200 cells/µl than in patients with CD4 <200 cells/µl or >350 cells/µl, “ : this sentence is not clear (twice <200 cells)

3. Page 7, first paragraph: “... trough which treatment...”

Discretionary Revisions:
1. Developed countries: what is the definition of “developed” countries? Since this is mostly based on economic criteria, it is better to use terms like “economically more developed countries” or “high income countries” depending on how the included countries were selected.

2. Though obvious form the introduction, the methods section should include “investigate HRQoL in HIV infected individuals” as one of the criteria for selection of articles (as HRQoL in other diseases is not included)

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

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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.