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: 2 Date: 4 August 2014

Reviewer: Christiana Noestlinger

Reviewer's report:

Revision

The authors have submitted a revised version of the manuscript, in which they have made substantial changes to the manuscript, including narrowing down the main focus of the paper. They have also included an overview table of the studies included in their research and they present the specific findings of the respective studies in this table. These are two major improvements of the paper.

1. Is the question posed by the authors new and well defined?

The authors have made substantial revisions based on the comments received. The most important is that they have omitted the part on the recommendations/interventions, and now have focused on the discussion and reflection of the HrQoL determinants and outcomes. Therefore, the manuscript now has a much clearer focus.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to replicate the work?

This is a non-systematic and narrative review, and the methods are fairly well described. Since the authors now do not include the figure on the framework anymore, it could be helpful to provide a bit more information on the framework, and how it was developed. They state: “...categories were chosen by analogy with the reporting of research on HRQoL performed in our hospital department...”.

It would be helpful to elaborate on this with a short description how this led to the a priori framework. (see p. 3)

3. Are the data sound and well controlled?

The additional table now introduced by the authors gives an overview of the articles included, and presents their main findings. This is very helpful for the reader, as one can go back to the specific results of the respective studies. Introducing this table has greatly improved the manuscript.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

YES. Due to the narrowed focus of the manuscript, the discussion and conclusion section also is more concise and based on the data presented.

6. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

YES. The abstract has been adapted to correspond to the revised manuscript.

7. Is the writing acceptable?

English language writing has improved, however, I still find the use of the tenses confusing. It should be more coherent. The authors should decide whether to report the results in present tense or in the past tense, but in a consistent manner throughout.

Minor essential revision:

p. 7: do you mean although or also? (4th paragraph)
p. 8: looking at stress resulting from...(4th paragraph): include this as an example, as there are many other stressors that PLHIV have to cope with.
p.10: I would suggest to use support in an unbiased manner instead of reinforce to emphasize the voluntary nature of decision to disclose. PLHIV should also be supported by health care professionals if they decide NOT to disclose.
p. 10: maybe say: not using alcohol instead of no alcohol use (3rd paragraph)
p. 10: showed an association with HRQoL (last paragraph)
p.12: include the PROQOL among the instruments that have been developed in cooperation with PLHIV (ie. extensive qualitative research)
p; 13: instead of saying “it seems”, which is somewhat a weak statement as a conclusion, I recommend to make your conclusions stronger, for instance by saying something like: “from the evidence studied here we can conclude that there is a consensus…”

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.