Title: Survival of AIDS patients in Sao Paulo-Brazil in the pre and post-HAART eras: a cohort study

Version: 1 Date: 10 May 2014

Reviewer: Andrew Zloza

Reviewer's report:

This retrospective study describes sociodemographic, behavioral, treatment, and survival characteristics of people living with AIDS in Sao Paulo, Brazil. While the findings presented here add to a growing collection of publications already describing this population, it's approach of separating populations into those receiving different treatment regimens over specific periods when such regimens were used (1988-1993, 1994-1996, and 1997-2003) makes this study one of interest, particularly to those studying HIV progression and responses in middle-income countries.

If the authors can successfully respond to the following issues raised, this work should eventually be published:

Major Compulsory Revisions
- (none)

Minor Essential Revisions
1) statements describing findings that are NOT statistically significant should not include indicators of direction (paragraph 4 of the results) -- if the p value is 0.283, then a difference was not observed and the statement should not read "were higher" (they could be considered higher if the comparison resulted in statistical significance).

2) all mentions of significance or lack of significance in the text should include an indicator of significance (e.g., a p value) including paragraph 4 of the results for the statement: "There was no significant difference..."

3) Figure 4 in the form included for review was not fully legible (a higher quality full-legible version has to be included in the final version of the manuscript)

4) There are numerous instances of grammatically incorrect English use throughout the manuscript (this could be accomplished by a native speaker and most likely does not require professional editing)

5) The included references are not up-to-date -- additional references from 2010 on (and from the past year in particular) should be cited, as they readily appear during a pubmed search of HIV studies in Brazil and because it is important for the authors to put their work in the context of the newest published findings.
Discretionary Revisions

1) In the Methods section the following statement is included "We applied the definition that was effective for each respective periods of validity" -- consider explaining why the most recent or the best definition was not used instead in this retrospective study.

2) In the Methods section describing study variables, one variable listed is "time from AIDS diagnosis to death" -- it is unclear whether death here is defined as any death or AIDS-related death. If it is the former and not the latter, consider explaining why this was used.

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

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' below.