Reviewer's report

Title: Twelve-month incidence and clearance of oral HPV infection in HIV-negative and HIV-infected men who have sex with men: the H2M cohort study

Version: Date: 24 September 2014

Reviewer: Jason Ong

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for an interesting article on the natural history of oral HPV in HIV MSM.

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS:

Introduction seems quite brief and doesn't give enough background information. Please reference papers of what is currently known about the natural history of oral HPV, what the specific gaps are, what are the clinical significance of these gaps, and how your paper will be addressing this gap.

MINOR ESSENTIAL REVISION

Limitation should include a discussion regarding possibility of sampling error with oral rinse sampling. A recent paper was published in JCM showing that oral rinse sampling may be missing HPV detections (http://jcm.asm.org/content/early/2014/04/03/JCM.00286-14). This would impact on the reliability of repeated sampling over time, i.e. could the incidence/clearance rates be simply a reflection of missed infections due to the sampling methodology?

Limitation should also discuss about the difference between DNA detection (not necessarily an infection) vs. RNA detection (more indicative of an infection). This potentially could explain your finding that there was higher likelihood of clearance in those with higher number of recent oral sex partners i.e. what you are detecting is not actual infection per se (RNA detection) but a transient habitation of HPV in the mouth (DNA detection)?

Discussion -

Line 201-204. Can you please report the actual difference in incidence rates in study reference 11.

Line 206 - what sexual behaviors were adjusted for? the term 'Sexual behavior' is too general.

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:**

none.