Reviewer’s report

Title: Prevalence of malnutrition among HIV-infected children in Central and West-African HIV-care programmes supported by the Growing Up Programme in 2011: a cross-sectional study

Version: 2 Date: 30 July 2014

Reviewer: Linda Aurpibul

Reviewer’s report:

Reviewer’s comments


Authors: Julie Jesson et al.

It is a retrospective data analysis using data from HIV care programmes conducted in 12 sites in 7 African countries. The results emphasized the need for growth and nutritional assessment in routine care for this population. The topic is not novel, but remains important and needed to be addressed.

I have a few comments as follow;

-I understand that the authors used data from medical records of children enrolled into the HIV care programmes. Thus, it would rather be called a retrospective data analysis, not a cross sectional study.

Abstract

-Page 2 line 82: the prevalences were not “estimated”, they were real finding from this study.

The full term “95% confidence interval” should be moved to the previous line when it was first used.

Methods

-Page 5 line 169: type of nutritional support mentioned here were those support from the Growing Up Programmes, weren’t they? Were there any other sources of nutritional supports around at that moment which might confound the study definition?

-Page 6 line 200: Why the authors use P< 0.25 for variables to be included in multivariate analysis? (conventionally P< 0.1 or <0.2 are used)?

Results

-Characteristics of study population, were history of breastfeeding available? It might be significant and associate with malnutrition especially for the young age group.
Discussion
-The discussion is very long, can the author make it shorter and more concise.
-The authors should start with their 4th paragraph (line 351-364) comparing their finding with other studies. The strength and study limitation should better be moved to the later section of the discussion (before summary).
-Page 12 line 436-439. The sentences might be true but they are not relevant to the study finding.
Table 1
-For gender, should the authors use term “male” and “female” instead of boys and girl as they had up to 19 years old patients that were not boys or girls anymore.
-What did 1,2,3-4 nutritional supports mean? They must be clarified in the footnote of the table (and also in table 4).
-The test name is “Chi-square” not Khi-square.
Table 2
-The first row (non malnourished) might be removed. Describing 3 groups of malnutrition were sufficient for readers to understand that the rest of them were not malnourished.
-Many of the second pieces of square brackets “[xx]“ are not in the right direction.
Table 5
-Variable named “ART” should be replaced with “Duration of ART”, and classified as # 6 months, < 6 month, not yet started, and missing.
-Did the Orphan status “yes” included both double and single orphan? It should be defined in the footnote.
-Numbers with 2 decimals in all 3 “OR” column should contain “dot” rather than “comma”, shouldn’t they?

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