Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Characterizing the Disability Experience among Adults Living with HIV: A Structural Equation Model Using the HIV Disability Questionnaire (HDQ) within the HIV, Health and Rehabilitation Survey

**Version:** 1  **Date:** 26 Oct 2018

**Reviewer:** Reviewer 2

**Reviewer's report:**

**PEER REVIEWER ASSESSMENTS:**

**OBJECTIVE** - Full research articles: is there a clear objective that addresses a testable research question(s) (brief or other article types: is there a clear objective)?
No - there are major issues

**DESIGN** - Is the current approach (including controls and analysis protocols) appropriate for the objective?
No - there are major issues

**EXECUTION** - Are the experiments and analyses performed with technical rigor to allow confidence in the results?
No - there are major issues

**INTERPRETATION** - Is the current interpretation/discussion of the results reasonable and not overstated?
No - there are minor issues

**OVERALL MANUSCRIPT POTENTIAL** - Could an appropriately REVISED version of this work represent a technically sound contribution?
Maybe - with major revisions

**PEER REVIEWER COMMENTS:**

**GENERAL COMMENTS:** The Disability Experience among Adults Living with HIV is an important topic, and deserves further research. However, significant revisions are needed, addressing some major concerns.

**REQUESTED REVISIONS:**
In terms of the rationale and justification for the study - not enough case is made in the paper. The Author(s) aim at characterizing the disability experience and examining the relationships between dimensions of disability among adults living with HIV, but this aim is too generic and it has to be better
defined and argued. The author(s) could break down into more specific objectives. Please also provide a closer linkage between the literature review and the specific objectives and between the specific objectives and each of the direct and indirect (mediating) effects in the SEM (Figure 1).

It is written that standardized path coefficients of >0.2-0.5 were considered as a medium (moderate) effect and >0.5 a large (strong) effect. I believe that these criteria are valid for correlation coefficients (see Cohen's guidelines on that) which are different from standardized path coefficients. I went through the book "Principles and Practice of Structural Equation Modeling", but I was not able to find such criteria. Please double check.

Mean imputation of missing values should not be used. See the work of Graham (2009).

It is essential to compare the characteristics of the sample and population from which it is drawn.

Please stress the theoretical implications of the study.


Note: This reviewer report can be downloaded - see attached pdf file.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

No

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.
Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

**Declaration of competing interests**
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