Reviewer’s report

Title: Factors Associated with Vaccination Completion and Retention among HIV Negative Female Sex Workers Enrolled in a Simulated Vaccine Efficacy Trial in Kampala, Uganda

Version: 0 Date: 21 May 2019

Reviewer: Fiona Guerra

Reviewer's report:

Page 4, lines 97-100: Consider being more clear that this was done using a hepatitis B vaccine, and possibly why ENGERIX-B was selected as the vaccine to simulate an HIV vaccine. Is it similar to HIV vaccines in trial in terms of number of injections or frequency or follow up?

Page 4, lines 110-112: Helpful to know if these visits (at months 3, 9, 12) also involved medication or testing or counselling as this might impact completion of these scheduled visits. For example, a participant might be more likely to attend a scheduled visit if it involved receiving a vaccine than if it involves only counselling.

There could be value to expanding on the strategies to stay in contact with FSWs.

Page 6, line 154: I think the word "up" is missing from this sentence. Should it read "picking up volunteers..." or do you actually mean picking/selecting volunteers who needed help to access this clinic. Unclear.

Page 7, lines 176-184: In the first line you mention "the vaccine regimen". It might be helpful to clarify if this means the 3-doses at the scheduled times, or if it includes all 9 visits. If the additional visits are going to be critical to an HIV vaccine efficacy study, then you should consider reporting this as a secondary outcome.

Page 10, lines 229-230: The language "attended up to the 12-month study visit" is unclear. It is unclear if this measurement is just attending the 12-month study visit, or having attended the visits "up to" and including the 12-month study visit. The problem is "attended up to".

Page 12, lines 277-279: Is "community stakeholders" referring to the pimps and middlemen mentioned in the previous sentence? It could be more clear by providing examples of community stakeholders.

Page 12, lines 283-287: It is interesting that there was no association between STIs and vaccination completion, but there is only one reference here. Is there only one study on this? Or is the reporting consistent and you are only providing one reference? Are there any studies that do show an association? I am asking more out of interest and also if there are other studies that show an association, then this needs to be rephrased because it is misleading.
Page 13, lines 309-310/Results: The end of the results section is a good opportunity or segue to report on a secondary outcome e.g. results for attendance at the other 6 scheduled visits that were not for vaccine doses.

Please review the entire manuscript for minor typos/spacing/capitalization etc.

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

Yes

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

Yes

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

Yes

**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.

I recommend additional statistical review

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Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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