Reviewer's report

Title: Factors associated with HIV Counseling and Testing Behavior among Undergraduates of Universities and Vocational Technical Training Schools in Tbilisi, Georgia

Version: 1 Date: 11 December 2014

Reviewer: Irma Kirtadze

Reviewer's report:

The article addresses an overall important issue related to factors associated with utilization of HCT among youth in Georgia. The paper has a potential to become an interesting contribution, but it has to address several issues:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1) Page 7, lines 194-196: it is difficult to understand how the answer on a question “If a relative of yours became infected with the HIV, would you want to be kept a secret” measures the stigmatizing attitude, and why only this single question was used. Authors need to cite any relevant literature to support this approach and/or provide rational explanation.

Minor Essential Revisions

2) Page 4, line 88: In “There was just one study from Ethiopia, 87 which found that perceived stigma was significantly associated with utilization of HCT “ it is not clear whether this means that individuals who perceived an HIV as stigmatizing disease were more likely to utilize HCT, or the opposite – they were less likely to utilize it. It would be helpful to provide definition for “perceived stigma”.

3) Page 4, line 105: “..the location of the highest number of HIV/AIDS cases – Tbilisi..” might be confusing for readers that are not familiar with epidemiology of HIV in Georgia. Please clarify what is actually meant – location with highest prevalence, or with highest number of occurrence of infection.

4) Page 7, line 199: It is not clear why the question relates to fiction literature specifically, and not any other type of literature. It would be useful to have explanation for that.

5) Page 10, line 258: “Regarding practice, practitioners should understand the relationship between other substance use and HCT and systematically monitor health behaviors in clinical encounters”. It is not clear how authors come up with this statement. Please provide either reference, or indicate how the study results support this statement.

Discretionary Revisions
6) Line 31-32 - The abstract indicates that “the specific aims of this study are to explore the role of HIV knowledge and level of stigmatizing attitudes towards HIV/AIDS”. However, results related to HIV knowledge are missing from the abstract.

7) Page 4, line 89: I believe “Balkan study” instead of “Balkans study” should be used.

8) Page 4, line 93: reference should be to the source15 instead of 14.

9) Page 5, lines 120-122 and lines 124-129 provide similar information. Suggest deleting lines 120-122.

10) Results section would benefit from narrative description of the sample.

11) As in the Abstract, authors indicated that “...the specific aims of this study are to explore the role of HIV knowledge and level of stigmatizing attitudes towards HIV/AIDS...” while the section lacks information on HIV-knowledge.

12) Page 9, line 238: “Importantly not having a HIV stigmatizing attitude…” an should be used instead of a.

13) Page 9, line 247: “..there is more opportunities..” Please replace is with are, or opportunities with opportunity.

14) Please check the type of reference 22.

15) Please indicate retrieval date for references: 2.

**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:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.