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: 2
Date: 21 January 2015

Reviewer: Irma Kirtadze

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revision

Stigma

The issue with defining, measuring and reporting for stigmatizing attitude remains the major flaw in the article. This is of particular concern, since authors focus most of the discussion and conclusion sections on this measure, and report it as a major finding of the study and a critical predictor of HCT. Authors’ response to my comment concerning the definition of stigmatizing attitude and validity of the measure did not provide any reasonable explanation to the issue. On the contrary, it deepened my concerns – the fact there were three related questions, and authors decided to select the one that “divided study sample more evenly”, seems even more concerning. In addition, this new information, provided in the revised version, raises question to the results presented. Authors report that “91.9% showed stigmatizing attitude” (line 230), while earlier in the text (line 207) they indicate that “proportion of respondents answering “Yes” to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd questions were 62%, 86%, and 35%”. What is then 91.9%? I would assume this is proportion saying “Yes” to at least one (of three) questions related to stigmatizing attitude. If that’s truth, then it is contrary to the definition of a “stigmatizing attitude”, proposed by authors for the purpose of this manuscript (lines 200-202). More importantly, value 807 (91.9%) for this variable (771 (96.1%) and 31 (3.9%) for respondents who never received and received HCT respectively) was utilized for the purpose of statistical analysis, as presented in Table 1. Both bivariate and multivariate analysis showed significant correlation between stigmatized attitude and HCT utilization. In case the value for the variable “stigmatizing attitude” was not correctly measured, the results of the analysis and the report as a whole is further compromised.

Fiction literature

I am afraid the answer did not provide any convincing explanation. It is still unclear why this particular question was selected and how relevant this variable might be for this analysis. Expectedly, authors found it difficult to provide any sensible explanation for this particular finding. The variable probably needs to be excluded.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest
Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests