Reviewer's report

Title: Impact of migration origin on individual protection strategies against sexual transmission of HIV in Paris metropolitan area, SIRS cohort study, France.

Version: 1 Date: 2 April 2014

Reviewer: Paul Ward

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All of the points below are Compulsory Revisions

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
The general area of the paper is clear – exploring condom use and HIV prevention in different groups in Paris. However, the paper is rather muddled and often difficult to read and it took a number of reads of the paper in order to understand this clearly.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The broad methods are clear, but there are a number of issues that need to be dealt with.

• You suggest this is a new/novel area of research, but the literature review did not adequately justify and argue this. We need to know this is new international knowledge, as opposed to just new in Paris.
• You talk about the variables, which is fine, but we need details on the validity and reliability testing. In particular, were the questions and instruments validated for these specific language and cultural groups? Can we assume that the different groups had similar levels of knowledge and understanding of HIV and HIV prevention – the participants were asked “do you usually do something to protect yourself against HIV?” which assumes they all understood this question.
• You asked a question “have you ever feared being infected by AIDS virus?” – I am not sure exactly how you interpreted the question or answers. What concepts are being measured here? I do not understand what you would infer from either a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’ answer.
• Why was father’s citizenship taken into account when parents had different citizenships? Why is it important to take father’s as opposed to mother’s?

3. Are the data sound?
The data seem to be ‘sound’ in terms of large sample size and appropriate data analysis. However, there were numerous problems with how these analyses were written which makes the manuscript extremely difficult to understand. For example, rather than presenting Odds Ratios in the text, the reader is just told to refer to Table 1, Model 1 etc. Also, the use of terms to refer to group was extremely confusing and meant that I could not understand which group had high
or low condom use for example – terms like ‘French people with French parents’, ‘French women with both French parents’, ‘foreign women and French women from foreign origin’. The authors need much simpler and clearer ways to refer to the groups.

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?

Linked to the points above, the Results section was almost empty of Odds Ratios – it needs much more evidence in this section. There were also a few instances where the authors said ‘(data not shown)’ – one cannot do this in a paper – either present the evidence or do not make the claim.

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?

Given the difficulty in making sense of the results, it was also very hard to interpret the claims made in the conclusion. However, one claim “the result suggests that Maghrebi women are insufficiently reached by prevention campaigns” seems strange. They found that Maghrebi women were less likely to use condoms, but that does not mean they have not had health promotion campaigns – it may mean they have ignored them, it may mean the campaigns were culturally inappropriate and therefore ‘meaningless’ to these women – there is a huge literature in HIV and other ‘risky’ practices such as smoking, high fat diets whereby people ‘know’ the healthy messages but for a number of psychological, economic, political, cultural and structural reasons do not conform. I suggest the authors be more nuanced and critical in their interpretation of their data.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?

Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?

No – I mentioned this earlier – they need a much clearer analysis of existing international literature on which their study rest and extends.

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?

The title is okay, but the abstract needs re-writing. The conclusion is misleading and the results make little sense as they are written.

9. Is the writing acceptable?

No – it needs re-writing by someone with English as a first language.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Not suitable for publication unless extensively edited

**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