Reviewer’s report

Title: Competition is not necessarily a barrier to community mobilisation among sex workers: A mixed method intervention planning assessment from Zimbabwe

Version: 2

Date: 22 March 2015

Reviewer: Lisa Lazarus

Reviewer’s report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Overall, this is an interesting paper. The main finding, that competition is not necessarily a barrier to community mobilization and support is of interest to those working in community-based practice. However, this manuscript requires major revisions before it can be considered for publication.

Abstract

Results

1. Was bivariate analysis conducted? I’m not sure CIs are really needed for the descriptive statistics.

Background

2. Please consider the following references of successful SW mobilization interventions:


Methods

3. More details about the study are required. Even though you refer to a previously published report, it is helpful for the reader to have a brief description of the study setting and process. I would suggest subheadings for the Methods
Section (Study design, Study Participants, Statistical Analysis, Qualitative Analysis).

4. How were sample sizes for each setting selected?

5. Why was the decision made to not conduct bivariate or multivariate analysis? The paper would largely benefit from a more complex analysis of the survey findings.

6. How were interviewers' selected? Were they members of the community?

7. Were honorariums/gifts provided to participants?

8. How long did it take to complete the survey or key informant interviews?

Results


10. The statistical analysis requires some work. I’m not sure that reporting just the basic descriptive percentages is of enough interest to those working in the field of community mobilization.

Discussion

11. The main finding, that “we found that both competition and peer support could be present at fairly high levels, and that perception of good relations among SW, belief in the potential to work for mutual gain, and widespread distrust and violent clashes could all co-exist” is of interest.

12. The Discussion should refer back to previously published research and what is already known about community mobilization. Please also refer to:


13. It would be informative to provide a brief overview of the intervention being discussed starting at line 318 earlier in the manuscript. The community-mobilization meetings are an outcome of the study, but how was community mapping and mobilization done to find seeds and key informant participants?

14. Study limitations should be addressed.

References

15. Please expand reference list.

Minor Essential Revisions

16. Please carefully review the grammar and language throughout. SW and SWs are used interchangeably. SWs is preferable.
Abstract

Methods

17. Line 36: Would be helpful to name the three sites.

18. Beginning at line 45, the sentences “In Mutare, 93% (95%CI: 89-95%) of SWs agreed there was a lot of competition; 88% (95%CI: 84-92%) reported that SWs strongly support each other and 85% (95%CI:80-90%) that SW could work together to improve work conditions. This contrasted with Victoria Falls and Hwange where fewer agreed there was competition between SWs (71% and 78%), but fewer reported that SW support each other (51% and 55%) or could work together (55% and 52%).” require some editing. I suggest: “In Mutare, 93% (95%CI: 89-95%) of SWs agreed there was a lot of competition; 88% (95%CI: 84-92%) reported that SWs strongly support each other; and 85% (95%CI:80-90%) believed that SW could work together to improve work conditions. Findings in Mutare contrasted with Victoria Falls and Hwange, where fewer respondents felt that there was competition between SWs (71% and 78%), but also reported less support among SWs (51% and 55%) and were less likely to work together (55% and 52%).”

19. Line 52: Remove the word “qualitatively”, replace with “key informant interviews”.

20: Line 55: Add a comma after the word “examples”.

Background

21. Line 75: Add a comma after “In 2012”.

22: Line 77: Add the word “prevalence” after “50%”.

23. Line 90: Add a comma after the word “Yet”.

Methods


Results

25. Quotation marks aren’t needed for the quotes.

26. Line 203, do you have thoughts as to why the ‘no response’ rate was so high?

27. Line 204-205: Delete: “Even including missing values, over half SW in all sites agreed or strongly agreed.” The high level of missing data needs to be weighed against the high number of respondents reporting agreement.

28. Line 228: Should be “work-related”.

29. Line 232: There should be a period after the word “examples”.
30. Can you provide some example quotes for the points made on lines 255-257?

30. Line 258: Should be “Health-related”

31. The section ends a little abruptly. I would add a sentence after the final quote.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**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