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: 17 April 2015

Reviewer: KariKalan N

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Comments:
Community mobilization is a strategy to create favorable environment and improve the effectiveness of behavioral intervention among HRGs like FSWs. This manuscript use a respondent driven survey data and Key Informant Interviews in three sites of Zimbabwe to assess how the competition among FSWs were impacting the community mobilization.

Major compulsory Revisions in Abstract and Introduction part.

1. The abstract doesn’t give the objective of this research paper. Without specifying objectives, the conclusion part of abstract looks detached from the abstract for any understanding.

2. The introduction part provides examples south African studies, Sonagachi Calcutta intervention and Avahan Intervention for explaining the importance of competition among FSWs in recruiting clients. (Line 94-104) This needs to be more detailed and have to discuss those study findings in detail. It needs to be explained that how this present study gains insight from those past findings and how the present study remains novel when compared to them.

Introduction needs to be more detailed with more references and a proper justification for the study objectives.

Major compulsory Revisions for Method section

3. Why RDS was used for this study? It needs to justified. RDS is used for hard to reach and highly hidden population like MSM and IDUs. But since FSW are not a hidden population, the authors need to justify the use of RDS specifically here.

4. Authors have hardly given any background details about the RDS process which involves RDS center, compensation, seed recruitment etc. This needs to be given.

5. There must be a detailed description of the three study settings

6. RDS usually involves incentives for the participants. Does this study participants were given incentives? If so that needs to be explained. Also the authors need to explain how incentives could have affected the information given
by the participants?
7. The sample size needs to be justified for this study?
8. How the RDS analysis weights were calculated?

Major compulsory Revisions in Results and analysis:
The authors have given the results of quantitative and qualitative component of the study in a intertwined manner. This makes it appear like a discussion section rather than a result section.

9. The authors need to separately provide the results for quantitative and qualitative analysis under separate headings.

10. The result section gave very minimal background and sex work setting details about FSWs. More background and sex work setting variables like education status, typology, marital status, occupational status (if any) needs to provided.

11. The quantitative results are plainly compared with the qualitative results and merely justified that competition and cooperation mutually exists among FSWs. This is hugely insufficient for such conclusion.

12. Overall the RDS analysis must have more explanatory variables and must be assessed of those findings. Results could also be compared for site wise differences and consistency of the findings.

Major compulsory Revisions in discussion and Conclusion:
13. It needs to be more elaborative based on the result section which has been suggested to be re organized completely with additional findings from RDS analysis.

Declaration of competing interests:
I have no competing interests related to this manuscript reviewing.