Reviewer’s report

Title: Understanding the socio-economic and sexual behavioural correlates of male circumcision across eleven voluntary medical male circumcision priority countries in southeastern Africa

Version: 2  Date: 3 March 2015

Reviewer: Paul Mkandawire

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Major comment

This is a well-written paper that addresses a topical issue within the realm of global health. It provides a very important analysis of baseline situation to the relationship between MC and sexual risk. This is the sort of study that could be the missing link for those who still ponder about the potential efficacy of the voluntary medical male circumcision. I also find this study vital in that it seems to indirectly ask another pertinent question that many commentators have been asking; is a one-size-fits-all medical male circumcision policy the best way to go. I would recommend this paper for publication but subject to the some major revisions. In other words how do the findings of this study related to or help to inform the scale up of the medical male circumcision for HIV prevention program. Given the potential value of the paper, I would like to see a more robust discussion of the study findings that enhances the policy relevance of the paper before it can be accepted for publication.

Other comments

Page 3 - There is about 14 or 15 medical male circumcision priority countries in SSA. What guided the choice of those countries selected for this study?

Page 3 Line 65 – Can the authors please report the proportion of respondents circumcised at home versus health facility?

Page 4 - I know there is tight space limitation but I still do feel that the breadth of
the literature covered
in this study is insufficient. There are many studies out there now on MC which
the researchers can
draw upon on order to better situate and motivate the paper.

Page 5 Line 53 - How was the choice of variables included in this study
determined?

Page 8 Line 129 - I am a little surprised with the finding that Christians in Malawi
are more likely to
circumcise. I am not objecting to the finding but the authors should cross-check
this finding because
other studies have reported that being a traditionally non-circumcising country it
is Moslems who are
likely to circumcise in Malawi.

Page 10 Line 184 – Is there any explanation for rural residence and higher
education to be associated
with higher odds of circumcising?