Reviewer’s report

Title: Predictors of Provider-Initiated HIV Testing and Counseling refusal by outpatient department clients in Wolaita zone, Southern Ethiopia: A case control study

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Reviewer: JM Kittner

Reviewer's report:

This is an interesting paper on reasons for refusal of HIV testing of persons in Southern Etiopia. The subject is of eminent clinical importance since it substantially hinders screening measures which, in high prevalence settings, are effective in decreasing the infection rate, and may have individual consequences, i.e. the decision whether initiation of ART will be necessary.

Self-developed instruments were used, in addition to in-depth personal interviews. The study design using a case-control study seems adequate. The study sample was drawn adequately (consecutive sample), however, no data on the refusal rate is presented. Although case control studies allow to work with lower subject numbers, the number of patients could have been somewhat higher.

Data presentation is well-done, and reliable multivariate analysis was performed. I suggest to reduce the place given for bivariate analysis since it is of limited value.

In order to better decide whether the data is representative and could be transferred to other areas of the region, the main question I have to the authors is to more in detail describe the population of the area examined:

How many inhabitants? Urban structure? (By the way, how is urban" defined in the analysis?), accessibility of the area? Mobility? Economic background?

The results show that patient-sided factors for refusal of testing preponderated. The interesting results need to be discussed more in depth. There is no data on the availability of antiretroviral therapy in the region - surely patients would not profit from (positive) testing if they cannot
receive ART. What about the knowledge about HIV in the population examined from the point of view of the authors? Are there any public campaigns? Whereas the other reasons for refusal of testing are quite understandable, the factor of residing in urban area” needs some more discussion.

Overall, from my point of view, this is an important study which is worth publishing.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

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