Reviewer’s report

Title: Patterns of HIV Testing Practices among Young Gay and Bisexual Men Living in Scotland: A Qualitative Study

Version: 1 Date: 02 Apr 2017

Reviewer: Steven Philpot

Reviewer’s report:

Thank you to the authors for their responses. I think the value of the paper has increased; there has been a marked improvement in language, and the findings are now well substantiated by the use of relevant quotes. I would also like to applaud the authors for their recognition of the tensions surrounding the term MSM and the 'middle ground' they have found throughout their paper. I think the use of gay, bisexual, and queer better reflects this sample. Finally, thank you to the authors for justifying/explaining why they were cautious about over-emphasising the role of gay community attachment in their interpretation of the data. I have no problem with their reasoning whatsoever. I only have one minor suggestion which has only come to mind now. Once this has been addressed I think the paper will be ready for publication.

In the discussion, the authors could point to a potential problem for the men who tested reactively. That is, their test results may not necessarily reflect the incident they were testing for (depending on the test they received) due to the window period most tests have. In Australia (sorry, I don’t know about how this parallels in Scotland), 4th generation tests having a window period of about one month, and rapid tests have a window period of up to three months. As such, if someone (for example) engaged in CLAI on May 25th, and then tested on June 6th as a reaction to that incident, their test results may not reflect that incident. Was this issue voiced by any participants in the sample? If so, there may be scope to include this into the findings as something that could be problematic to testing reactively. If not, I think the authors could still raise this in the discussion as a potential problem, and perhaps something that could be/has been addressed in the past by health promotion. I am aware the authors have probably reached their word count, so only two or three sentences would be necessary. This is an important point nonetheless and should be mentioned.

Thank you to the authors for their efforts in bringing this paper to fruition.

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?
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Yes

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