Reviewer's report

Title: Challenges with seeking HIV care services: Perspectives of older adults infected with HIV in western Kenya

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Reviewer: Enid Schatz

Reviewer's report:

This paper is a strong addition to a under-research topic - the experiences of older Africans on ART. The findings nicely dovetail work from other older African populations, and add new insights in certain areas. The combination on building on existing evidence and adding new information make it a potentially important input.

I would have liked to see a conceptual framework that would have given more body on which to build an analysis (most of the papers below have options for a conceptual framework, some would likely work better than others). Without the conceptual framework, the analysis is a bit stark, and at times more report like than analytical. Adding a conceptual framework would help to move the results from a listing of quotes under each theme, to a more linked/context-based analytical project. That said, the themes are appropriate, the quotes nicely demonstrate the themes. There is a clear presentation of the very real/unique barriers experienced by older persons (would be great to see more in the discussion comparing older persons with the young so it is clear what things are unique and what are exacerbated in some way).

Would be helpful to have a table with some descriptives of the sample.

The section on social relationships doesn't really fit with the other themes. I think if the authors bring in a conceptual framework, it will become clearer what works well together to tell a bigger story. I would guess that this section (which could/should be published elsewhere) won't fit. The plus is that this will give more room to do a deeper analysis of the sections that remain, linking the issues with each other and to a framework. It is notable that in the first couple sentences of the discussion, where the key themes are outlined that social relationships isn't mentioned - in all likelihood because it doesn't fit and doesn't really speak to the same types of issues. Similarly, on the bottom of page 20 and top of 21, the discussion about social support feels out of place and like a bigger separate issue, rather than an extension of issues of stigma.

The support group could be presented as a way to combat stigma. It doesn't really fit with the other social relationship components. This might be worth keeping but reframing and developing further.

The discussion should draw on more of the current literature on older African's health and wellbeing/older African's living with HIV (some papers listed below; I'm happy to share our working/conference papers, which are currently under review).
The author(s) recommend (following up on a recommendation of the participants) to have older/gender-matched providers. Is this really feasible? Maybe instead a more feasible suggestion is to have peer health advocates who attend appointments with the older person and help them divulge sensitive things and/or advocate for their needs. It seems more likely that older CHW or peer health advocates could be trained for these purposes, then that there are older nurses/doctors to be found, especially in rural areas.

Papers that have found similar results in other African settings:


Schatz E, Mukumbang F & Knight L. Barriers and facilitators to ART access among older South Africans living with HIV. American Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, August 11-14, 2018.


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
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