Reviewer’s report

Title: The impact of antiretroviral therapy on symptom burden among HIV outpatients with low CD4 count in rural Uganda: nested longitudinal cohort study

Version: 0 Date: 04 Jan 2017

Reviewer: Cathy Campbell

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for this opportunity to review this manuscript on an important topic, palliative care in sub-Saharan Africa. The paper is well written. The references are substantive and represent a great synthesis of the current literature. Great to see pilot data. The rationale for presenting longitudinal findings separate from outcomes of the main RCT is not presented. I understand that authors/researchers want to be able to publish as many papers as possible from a study, but I think that given the relatively small sample size the researchers tried too hard to display the findings in multiple ways. Perhaps the authors could be selective in choice of graphical displays used in the final paper.

The findings that although ARTs and fluconazole were initiated the participants still had high symptom and distress burden underscores that the challenges of managing symptom burden in HIV/AIDS. The discussion was well done and placed the findings within the broader context of palliative care.

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.

Unable to assess

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

No

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 recommend additional statistical review

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published

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