Reviewer's report

Title: Community resistance to a peer education programme in Zimbabwe

Version: 2 Date: 15 July 2014

Reviewer: Kristien Michielsen

Reviewer's report:

1. Is the research question well developed and relevant?
   The manuscript is of high relevance to the study field. Too many effectiveness studies are published without reference to the actual implementation of the intervention, without which it is difficult to interpret effectiveness data. It is crucial that such studies are published in academic literature.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
   Yes

3. Are the data sound?
   Yes

4. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
   Yes

5. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
   I have some suggestions for the discussion, see further.

6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
   Yes

7. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
   Yes

8. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
   Yes

9. Is the writing acceptable?
   Yes

I only have some minor essential revisions:

INTRODUCTION:
- in general, I would like to see more information on the actual peer education
programme, such as: what are the specific objectives of this component? What activities were undertaken? What did the 63,000 PE meetings talk about exactly? how was 'promoting safer sexual behaviour' defined?
- p. 6, line 1999: add sample size
- p.7, line 212 and line 219: how would you explain the contradiction that condoms were less used in casual sex, and more accepted within marriage?

METHODS
- p. 8, line 247: where these staff members of local clinics part of the intervention?
- table: please revise the heading (transcript details), and remove the codes of the project implementers
- add timing of the interviews: in which year were they conducted? It seems this was long after the end of the intervention (in 2003)

RESULTS
- p. 10, line 310: drop last sentence from the citation, it does not add anything and is not very clear.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION
- in general, even though I think this publication is crucial, I also leaves me with the feeling that it does not add much new. We already know that there is a problem with PE if peer educators are not well supported, we know that local context needs to be taken into account, and that social realities can hinder safe sexual behaviours. I would find it an added value if the discussion could also touch upon the issue of how the programme dealt with these constatations (was there any monitoring?). I would also suggest to put a recommendation in the text that effectiveness evaluations should have at least marginally address implementation issues in order to be able to interpret the data correctly.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.