Reviewer's report

Title: Inpatient Mortality of HIV-infected Adults in Sub-Saharan Africa and Possible Interventions: Literature Review

Version: 1  Date: 20 January 2014

Reviewer: France Lert

Reviewer's report:

Major compulsory revisions
The paper is based on the experience of caring for HIV infected inpatients in a hospital facility in Tanzania, to discuss five mechanisms that contribute to persistent mortality in people infected with HIV. The authors present some data on their experience (mortality rates, delay in HIV diagnosis, diagnosis of OI and in treatment initiation. They discuss five dimensions in the organization of health care that contribute to high mortality rates in people living with HIV. Their paper is based on a review of recent literature on HIV testing and care organization in sub Saharan Africa.

The authors' interest for the issue is based on their experience as health care providers in the Bugando medical center in Mwanza (Tanzania) , however the – key- issue they raised, high rates of mortality, relates to high rates of mortality among people living with HIV and not only during hospital stay : insufficient coverage of testing, lack of implementation of PICT in health care settings, delay in diagnosis of OI, related to insufficient laboratory capacity, delay in initiating ART, lack of support to prevent loss of follow-up.

The authors provided only scattered data on the activity at Bugando Medical Center : area, prevalence in the area, provision and true availability of services for testing and treatment, size of their HIV caseload, care organization etc. Thus the paper is not a presentation of clinical data in a given are. Data on the situation at Bugando Medical Centre might be seen as an example of the situation regarding HIV programs at time of recommendations for universal testing and early treatment. These data either should be developed to produce a full paper on the impact of poor implementation of the local program and the literature review would be presented in the discussion section or the data on the Bulango Medical Center should be mentioned as an example in the introduction section.

If the main object was to provide a literature review, the method should be presented with more details (period, databases used, methods used to retrieve the papers, selection etc.). For each component of the whole process leading to persistent high mortality, the authors should be more systematic in stating the contribution to higher mortality, the timing of recommendations and their actual implementation, the identified barriers to effectiveness related to failures in the health care system functioning (shortage of staff, shortage of reagents, drugs,
poor organization, poor training etc.) and in the society at large (stigma, lack of resources to face the expenses related to care and treatment etc.). The authors should be encouraged to provide a newly structured paper.

**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.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No competing interests