Reviewer's report

Title: Health Facility Barriers to HIV Linkage and Retention in Western Kenya

Version: 2

Date: 10 October 2014

Reviewer: Nkoli E Ezumah

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1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
No research questions were indicated but the findings are in consonance with the objective of the study.

2. Are the methods appropriate and well described?
The methods used are appropriate. The authors utilized a qualitative method and Focus Group Discussions and In-depth Interviews were instruments used in data collection. The participants were appropriately selected and details of their characteristics were presented in the appendix. The method of data analysis was adequately explained.

3. Are the data sound?
The data presented are sound.

4. Do the figures appear to be genuine, i.e. without evidence of manipulation?
There is no evidence of data manipulation in the presentation.

5. Does the manuscript adhere to the relevant standards for reporting and data deposition?
Yes relevant standards for data reporting and deposition were met.

6. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data?
The discussions and conclusions are well balanced and are supported by the data presented. However the following corrections are necessary.

7. Are limitations of the work clearly stated?
The limitations are clearly stated. According to the authors since the study used a qualitative method based on a few communities the findings may not be generalized to the wider Kenyan populations.

8. Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
The authors had an up to date review of relevant literature on the subject of their study and adequately acknowledged the sources utilized.

9. Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
A suitable title was utilized and the abstract reflects what was found in the study.
10. Is the writing acceptable? The writing style is fair.

Major Compulsory Revisions: NONE
Minor Essential Revisions
1. Key words:
   (i) Add Barriers
2. Background:
   1. There should be a definition/explanation of linkage and retention. It should not be assumed.
   2. Editorial mistakes which need to be corrected.
      (i) Line 4: have been noted should be replaced with has been noted
      (ii) Line 22: Western of Kenya should read “western Kenya”
3. Methods
   The following editorial mistakes needs to be corrected.
   (i) Line 49: Privacy and confidentiality were assured not was assured
4. Results
   The following corrections need to be effected.
   (i) Line 81: The caption should read Factors that were unique to linkage
   (ii) Line 85: These was should be replaced with These were
   (iii) Line 122: from was repeated
   (iv) Line 167: The method of presenting the illustrative quotes was not clear. The salient findings should be specified before the corresponding quote is presented. For example on line 167 frustration should have been identified as a factor affecting retention before the statement “ I can also add frustration…,”
   (v) Lines 174-175: Omission: Lack of confidentiality ( of was omitted)
   (vi) Line 189 -194: The issue raised is not just about communication dynamics but also depicts the negative attitude of caregivers to clients.
   (vii) Line 193: stupidity should be replaced with stupid
   (viii) Health providers should be replaced with health provider
   (ix) Line 208: Omission: “Another thing is that there…”
5. Discussions
   The following corrections are necessary.
   (i) Line 272: highlighting should be replaced with highlighted
   (ii) Line 303: Omission: The articles the and to are omitted. “There is the need to redefine need …”
   (iii) Line328: Patients not Patient
   (iv) Line 333: influence not influences
(v) Line 337: viewed a should read viewed as
(vi) Line 338: HIV; should be replaced with HIV, which is

Discretionary Revisions:
None

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

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

**Declaration of competing interests:**
I declare that I have no competing interests