Reviewer’s report

Title: Knowledge of occupational exposure to HIV: a cross sectional study of healthcare workers in Tumbi and Dodoma hospitals, Tanzania

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Reviewer: Gerard GP Pellissier

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BMC Health Services Research
2014/08/07
Manuscript ID: 1751262254109709_article
Title: Knowledge of occupational exposure to HIV: a cross sectional study of healthcare workers in Tumbi and Dodoma hospitals, Tanzania.

Reviewer GP Comments:

This is a manuscript reporting results from a Survey conducted in 2 regional hospitals in Tanzania to assess HCW knowledge on occupational exposure to HIV. Based on the results of the Survey, authors state that collective effort is needed to improve PEP awareness among HCW.

Before considering this paper for publication, authors must address the following concerns:

MAJOR CONCERNS:

1. In the Background section, authors should state if there is any national recommendation for HIV PEP targeting Healthcare personnel. Any relevant study to show based in Tanzania, relating to accidental blood exposure risk in Healthcare workers, or to HIV prevalence in the general population?

2. In the Methodology section,

Data analysis and statistical techniques: Types of personnel were categorised into four groups. It is unclear in which group for example Hospital cleaners (much more at risk than administrative staff) were included? Instead of text describing these groups (last paragraph), a table presenting the types of HCW (see item 4 of the questionnaire) in each group would be helpful. It seems important to include all exposed personnel in data analysis.

3. In the Results section:

First paragraph: I understand that no HCW refused to answer the Survey: right? Despite the high response rate, you should discuss -- in the Discussion section-- the representativity of participating HCW (on a voluntary basis) and of results because no randomization was performed for the inclusion of HCWs.

4. In the Discussion section:
Second paragraph: Optimal post exposure care... remains a high priority for protecting HCW. Nevertheless, primary prevention of occupational exposures must be a top priority.

In this article, there is no information or overview of the situation in these 2 hospitals (accidental blood exposure risk; existence and diffusion of written protocols regarding prevention of accidental blood exposures and follow-up post exposure; availability of personal protective equipment; information and training of HCWs undertaken before the survey…) that could help put results into perspective. In particular, you could briefly present/discuss some results of a previously published article (see ref 10)?

MINOR CONCERNS:
Methodology section:
Study design and area: reasons for selection of these hospitals should be briefly presented, even if explained elsewhere.

Data collection: I would end the paragraph by your first sentence « The method of data collection is fully described elsewhere ».

References section:
Ref.1: Names of authors have to be corrected: Jagger J,…

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT:
1 – Is the question posed by the authors well defined?
YES
2 – Are the methods appropriate and well described?
NOT NECESSARILY
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?
NOT NECESSARILY
6 – Are limitations to the work clearly stated?
NOT NECESSARILY
7 – Do the authors clearly acknowledge any work upon which they are building, both published and unpublished?
PRESUMABLY YES
8 – Do the title and abstract accurately convey what has been found?
YES
9 – Is the writing acceptable? 
YES

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**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