**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** Challenges in the delivery of public HIV testing and counselling (HTC) services in Douala, Cameroon: Provider perspectives and implications on quality of HTC services

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 09 Jan 2017

**Reviewer:** Anh Tran

**Reviewer’s report:**

Thank you for giving me a chance to review the article: "Challenges in the delivery of public HIV testing and counselling (HTC) services in Douala, Cameroon: Provider perspectives and implications on quality of HTC services". I have some major comments as followings:

1. The manuscript should be better polished, word choice should be revised. Abstract is too lengthy.

2. Introduction:

   2.1 What is FTR rate? paragraph 3?

   2.2 The rationale of study should also mention about previous studies being conducted in other developing countries, and then say about Cameroon

3. Method:

   3.1 The sentence: "We chose Donabedian's model as it is widely used..."should have references: studies/reports have used this model before?

   3.2 Qualitative software should have reference

   3.3 Ethics number should be provided

4. Results:

   Table 2 does not have any inputs in the Result section. I could hardly see any findings from Table 2. Instead of yes and no, the authors should also consider listing the numbers, for example, number of staff (graduate, lay, and etc). Any findings from Table 2 should be mentioned in the Result section.

   Language used in Table 1 and 2 is conflicting: French and English

   More basic calculations should be included from Table 1 and 2, for example, mean working experience, % of having referral system, % if anonymous client coding...So much related and useful information could be read from the Table 2.
Qualitative section:

I recommend the quotes should be written separately with the text. It is easier to follow.

I strongly recommend the authors revise the quotes and select more relevant/more meaningful quotes. Some quotes did not bring any meaning to the theme and therefore they should be removed. For example, about training and qualification of lay counsellors, the first quote: "the training ran..." was not relevant whereas the quote about self training was very relevant but being described very shortly. Are there any similar ideas from other study sites could be added to strengthen the theme?

The general information about training, salary, equipment stated in the Government report should be shortly described (with reference) at the beginning of every theme so the readers can understand the current practice. For example, the staff complained about the salary. So what is the current salary listed for them? Or if it is not clearly stated in the Government document, that is a problem and it is worthwhile mentioning in the manuscript.

Lots of things could be added to strengthen the arguments. Unfortunately, I just saw the author list the quotes without any comments/additions to make their arguments stronger.

I recommend the author re-write the part: Cost of the screening test and Consent to the screening test. I could hardly find what the authors want to claim. Again, if the quotes are not relevant to the findings, they should be removed. I don't think the authors should list all the items in the Donabedian's model if they are not really problems. For example, cost of the screening test section, what do the authors want to claim here? Is it expensive? Is it co-payment not working? Or consent to the screening test section, not clear what the authors want to say. I think these sections are more relevant with patient perspective. Please consider.

Discussion:

The biggest limitation of the manuscript is to view the quality of HTC just from service provider perspective but not from patient perspective. This should be mentioned.

Generally, the authors should have a major revision. All the quotes should be revised, texts should be rewritten to strengthen the arguments. The conclusions cannot be announced with the current presentation.

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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