**Reviewer’s report**

**Title:** The HIV self-testing debate: Where do we stand?

**Version:** 0  **Date:** 04 Aug 2017

**Reviewer:** Victoria Frye

**Reviewer's report:**

This is an interesting and well-written commentary analyzing the debate on HIV self testing. The authors do a nice job of introducing the topic and differentiating between home and self testing. Here I note some areas where the manuscript could be improved as well as some concerns around the method employed.

**Background:**

Line 26: Please cite the "calls for scale up" that have merged in recent years and months.

It may be interesting to include some data on the increase in the number of papers published that discuss or empirically assess HIV self-testing over the years to bolster the claims around the increase in support absent clear empirical evidence (lines 39-44).

**Method:**

The authors do not go into detail regarding the method they used to conduct the literature review. There are numerous types of reviews and a robust literature discussing them, their methods and how to evaluate the quality of each. It would be helpful for the authors to add some further description of their review method (Grant, M. J., & Booth, A. (2009). A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. Health Information & Libraries Journal, 26(2), 91-108.)

I am not sure why the authors missed or did not include the article cited below, but it seems like it should have been included.


The method and theoretical grounding of the analysis is also not described in detail. A brief description of analytic work sessions are included, but whether a specific method or theoretical
framework for analyzing a debate was used in unclear. This article, for example, describes in
Changing policy framing as a deliberate strategy for public health advocacy: a qualitative policy
case study of minimum unit pricing of alcohol. The Milbank Quarterly, 92(2), 250-283.

The authors make statements about the change in support for self-testing over time, but also offer
no empirical evidence for such a statement. It seems that there may be a way of quantifying this
by applying and standard analytic method. Alternatively, they could present a supplementary
table indicating the level of support of each article reviewed, which would make clear that the
level and/or number of supportive articles increased over time.

With this said, the article makes a contribution in that it assists the researchers and policy-makers
working in this area to organize the components of the debate around the technology, which is
rapidly changing. This will likely be a useful organizational framework for the future. However,
the manuscript and the effort overall would benefit from addressing the areas of concern outlined
above.

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**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.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable
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