Reviewer's report

Title: Sex work stigma and non-disclosure to health care providers: data from a large RDS study among FSW in Brazil

Version: 1 Date: 04 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Joanne Csete

Reviewer's report:

Please see the comments in the attached annotated manuscript. If any of them are not clear, please come back with questions in your response to the comments.

The main concerns are as follows:

--The manuscript, both abstract and text, remains full of language suggesting that the study can determine impact, effect or causality. These statements need to be corrected.

--There seem to be logical inconsistencies in the interpretation of results, as well as continued tendency to state the results in causal ways. The paragraph in lines 306-310 is very hard to follow and may be fundamentally incorrect. It says that those who perceived they would be discriminated against in health services were "less likely to not reveal" their status as sex workers. The logical conclusion would be that anyone who anticipates stigma would be less likely to reveal their status, not less likely to NOT reveal their status. This statement of the results is exactly the opposite of the statement on lines 319-320. There is really a need for clearer and more straightforward statements of the results.

--The discussion section is filled with statements that do not seem in any way to flow from the results here. See comments in attached file.

--Elements that are characterized as human rights violations may require more explanation. "Presenting HIV results" is not inherently a violation -- is it compulsory testing on pain of losing one's livelihood that is the violation? Paying any amount of money to a third party, while it may be technically against the law, may not be a human rights violation in reality if it means being able to work in a brothel rather than more unsafely on the street. But at least explain to the reader why these are considered human rights violations, which is not the same as saying that they are against Brazilian law.

--Girls under 18 may engage in sexual transactions, but they should not be referred to as sex workers.

--The references need to be revised without bold-faced titles.

Please see all other comments in the uploaded file.
Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Does the work include the necessary controls?
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Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
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No

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
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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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