Reviewer's report

Title: The patient voice: A survey of worries and anxieties during health system transition in HIV services in Vietnam

Version: 1 Date: 17 Oct 2019

Reviewer: Minh Pham

Reviewer's report:

This is a generally well-written paper of interest for researcher(s)/policy maker(s) in the field. However, some major revisions are required to improve the quality of the paper & the translation of research

Introduction:

- More details on SHI schemes are needed for readers to understand the broader context of health insurance in Vietnam. What does "social health insurance" mean? Does it include both "compulsory" and "voluntary" health insurance? What is covered in this paper?

Methods:

- Study participants: It is not clear if the study participants (received HIV services and recruited at NHTD) had already been "decentralised" to receive HIV service at their SHI registered health facilities? Or they are still attending OPC at NHTD at the time of the survey. The question "Do you have any concerns about receiving HIV services in your SHI-registered health facilities" provided data base on participant's perception or experience?

- Justifications for categorisation of variables are needed e.g. duration of receiving services at NHTD (<5 year (why?), 5-9, &gt;10 years?), residence (Hanoi/around Hanoi (? which ones how far?)/others

- Variable selection for regression should be theoretically, not statistically driven as previous researches have examined and identified factors associated with outcome of interest (health insurance coverage)

Results:

- 22.9% participants had history of IDU & 20.9% those who don't have SHI card "don't know how to get it" indicates that a significant portion of study subjects may not/cannot be covered under "compulsory" health insurance. This needs to be explained in more details in the discussion

- 22% "do not have SHI card" and 86% "had concerns about receiving…" are large outcomes. Odds ratio overestimates the association. Appropriate method to estimate risk ratio is preferred and should be used (e.g. Poisson regression with robust standard error)
Discussion:

- The first paragraph is repeated and should be placed in the result

- As commented above procedures for individual obtaining health insurance card should be described and discussed

- The study sample may not be "representative" for the whole PLHIV population in Vietnam & should be taken into account in the discussion

- What is the definition of "universal SHI coverage"? 100% coverage? The 78% SHI coverage in this sample is high? What is the national coverage? In the general population and in PLHIV? The authors should provide these statistics to give more broader context for the discussion

- The discussion related to "quality of health services...." needs clarification/context: perceived quality… or actual experienced receiving HIV services at decentralised care?

- "Selective sample" attending HIV services at national hospital for a long period, leaving outside of Hanoi (must have economic means to visit clinic regularly) … should be considered a limitation

Conclusion

- No data supporting "SHI coverage progress rapidly"

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.

Unable to assess

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?  
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