Reviewer’s report

Title: "Virus Carriers" and HIV testing: Navigating Ukraine's HIV policies and programming for female sex workers

Version: 0 Date: 03 Oct 2018

Reviewer: Rinita Dam

Reviewer's report:

This is a very interesting study. However, the number of semi-structured interviews carried out as part of this study is very small. Please clarify potential implications of the findings and limitations of the study, due to the small sample size.

On page 6, line 29, under the sub-heading 'Semi-structured interviews', why were the interviews conducted in different settings (in person or via Skype)? How can that have influenced the results?

Furthermore, on page 6, lines 42-44, how would carrying out one interview help "gain some understanding of how war affects..."? Why was this particular interviewee selected?

Why weren't FSWs not interviewed for their views? Was access an issue? However, if the authors/researchers had already worked with AIDS Alliance and other HIV-related NGOs, surely, they would have connections with FSWs and could have utilized the snowball technique to identify and gain access in order to provide a balanced view to the study?

In the limitation section, the authors state that interviews were only carried out with civil society. However, they don't elaborate on the implications of this on the study findings. Could the authors please clarify the implications?

Can the authors please elaborate on the process of translation and transliteration, especially, because most of the interviews were carried out in Russian and Ukrainian, subsequently, analysed and reported in English? Can the authors please clarify what steps were taken in order to prevent the meanings from not being lost in translation? How was the validity of the data generated?

On page 9, line 37, a space is required between 'including' and 'FSWs'.

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