Reviewer's report

**Title:** Association between Wanting Circumcision and Risky Sexual Behaviour in Zimbabwe: Evidence from the 2010-11 Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey

**Version:** 1  
**Date:** 2 September 2014

**Reviewer:** Ian Askew

**Reviewer's report:**

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. The manuscript lacks a clear conceptual framework or analysis plan that explains and justifies the selection of variables included in the analyses, beyond wanting a circumcision and types of risky sexual behaviour. Seven variables were included in the analysis as potential explanatory variables. Please provide a brief explanation for why each factor was included (for example, has an association been shown in the existing literature?) so that the reader can understand why the investigators felt that it might be associated with circumcision wantedness and/or with experience of risky sexual behaviours.

2. The discussion of the factors associated with wanting a circumcision does not adequately describe the findings in Table 1. All 7 factors showed some degree of association with wanting a circumcision, but only three of these are discussed in the narrative. Please expand this section to describe all seven factors, and include your thoughts on why the findings are the way they are.

3. Please include the n values for each category in the tables. For example, the number of uncircumcised Muslims is probably minuscule and so could probably be removed.

4. The discussion section needs to discuss all of the findings and to summarize and interpret what these mean together. For example, the first paragraph describes the findings concerning three of the factors in Table 1, but not the other four; also, the discussion does not sufficiently explain the findings or how the programmatic recommendations were reached. For example, why would formerly married men be most interested in VMMC - is it because they are having more risky sex than currently or unmarried men? This paragraph lacks a discussion of whether there are interactions between these seven factors that taken together may suggest something important. For example, the men least interested in VMMC are young, poor, uneducated, unmarried and living in urban areas (likely to be slum dwellers), and in Manicaland and Mashonaland.

The second paragraph in the discussion summarizes Tables 2-5 for the wantedness variable and each type of risky behaviour but doesn't interpret these findings. For example, Table 3 indicates that wanting a circumcision is inversely associated with using a condom at last risky sex. Could this indicate that men...
using a condom during risky sex feel that they are sufficiently protected and so don’t need to also be circumcised?

Moreover, the paragraph says nothing about the associations for each category of risky behaviour and the seven explanatory variables, whereas there is a wealth of information to be discussed in these tables. Moreover, no discussion is made about whether some of these explanatory variables are more important for some or all of the risk categories: Have the investigators considered creating a 4-point scale to create an aggregate index of risky behaviour which could then be analysed for each of the seven explanatory variables.

In short, this paper needs a much more rigorous and comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the findings presented in the tables.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests