

Reviewer's report

Title: Utilising demography and sex work characteristics of female sex workers to enhance HIV prevention programmes in India

Version: 2 Date: 13 March 2006

Reviewer: Marleen Temmerman

Reviewer's report:

General

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)

Improvements in statistical reporting are required, report standard deviations with mean values. Report mean or median depending on data distribution, rather than both and data on spread of values (sd or IQR as appropriate). Do statistical tests where appropriate e.g. p10 comparing age at starting sex work between rural and urban groups.

While data may not be available to calculate statistical tests for differences in mean age (table 2), statistical tests comparing study data and state data for proportions could be done.

Table 3 and 4 remain overloaded, means could be presented and figure two removed as table 1 contains much of this information.

Conclusion of abstract: 'infection with HIV/AIDS' should be infection with HIV.

Description of methods is confusing, it seems the main study aims to compare baseline data with follow-up data but the study reported in this manuscript summarizes baseline data. The first sentence of methods section does not clearly make that distinction.

Several results of stats tests are reported in the discussion section but not mentioned in results nor in tables.

Bivariate and univariate analysis are reported, methods state only univariate analyses are reported.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

The title could be re-phrased to better reflect the study design and study objectives, specifically its a description of demography and characteristics rather than their utilization.

Inconsistent style is used to write numbers e.g. 5000 and 5,000.

Use of standard terms to describe HIV epidemics states rather than low and serious (2nd paragraph of background).

The authors describe a limitation in first paragraph of the discussion, but could suggest possible effects of this limitation or direction of bias.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests