

Reviewer's report

Title: Pattern of neuropsychological performance among HIV positive patients in Uganda

Version: 3 **Date:** 8 February 2007

Reviewer: david hardy

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General

Following is a re-review of the manuscript "Pattern of neuropsychological performance among HIV positive patients in Uganda" by Robertson, Nakasujja, Wong, Musisi, Katabira, Parsons, Ronald, and Sacktor. Although the initial manuscript was perplexingly sloppy, the revised manuscript is now much improved and a stronger paper. Many issues have been addressed, corrected, clarified, etc. Below are a few comments.

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

None.

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

On p.12 (second paragraph, line 4), the reference they cite [25] is incorrect. Navia, Jordan, and Price (1986) do not examine activities of daily living etc.; they present only neurocognitive/neuropathological data on HIV patients.

On p. 11 (paragraph 2, line 7) the citation "Laeyendecker et al. (2006)" needs to be removed and replaced with the appropriate number citation.

Tables are greatly improved. However, at this point, why not present them in the same style? Also, in Table 2, you should include the Total z score since you mention it along all the other NP test results on p. 10 (line 2).

I'm not sure why correlations were conducted between WHO disease stages and NP test performance. Why not just do ANCOVAs?

Since you mention that not only the characterization of NP impairment might be different in non B clade endemic areas but also the prevalence of dementia, is the proportion of HAD in your sample comparable to clade B samples (US, Europe)? This is central to the purpose of your study.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

Although requiring the negative control subjects to have a negative HIV ELISA in the last year is better than no proof at all (as in many HIV neuropsychological studies), I wonder what the chance is of any control subjects actually being HIV+. This issue was not addressed in the revision, and all it would take is a short comment mentioning this minor limitation. Group differences may be underestimated in the present study if some of the "HIV-" subjects were actually HIV+.

I realize that the authors do not want to conduct an extensive review of the neuropsychology/HIV literature, and I don't think that would be necessary as well. However, because they are concerned with patterns of neuropsychological deficits, it would seem prudent to mention and cite at least a study or two—this would just take a sentence citing the NRC 500 paper that is already in their reference section or the Miller paper, etc.

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.