

## Peer Review Report

# Review Report on Retention and predictors of attrition among People Living with HIV on Antiretroviral Therapy in Guinea: A 13-year historical cohort study in nine large-volume sites

Original Article, Int J Public Health

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### EVALUATION

#### **Q 1** Please summarize the main findings of the study.

This was an overall good paper covering an important topic in a country with limited data on HIV. Retention or attrition are important factors to consider in HIV programming with focus on addressing predictors associated with attrition.

#### **Q 2** Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

The authors do a good job of capturing the strengths and limitations of the study; I would add selection bias since site selection was based on availability of electronic databases; attrition might be worse for non-selected sites without electronic records

#### **Q 3** Please provide your detailed review report to the authors. The editors prefer to receive your review structured in major and minor comments. Please consider in your review the methods (statistical methods valid and correctly applied (e.g. sample size, choice of test), is the study replicable based on the method description?), results, data interpretation and references. If there are any objective errors, or if the conclusions are not supported, you should detail your concerns.

Major comments:

\*\* Sample size/sampling needs more detail. How exactly was sampling done? Was it just a full list of all patients at the sites?. What were the sampling criteria? Is it described elsewhere? If so, needs to be cited.

\*\* More details/literature review needed in the Introduction including information on the HIV context in Guinea and the study rationale

Minor comments:

\*\*Some copy editing would be helpful; here are some suggestions

--Ebola/poverty speaks to the health systems challenges, but not sure that it's relevant (maybe include in the Discussion section).

--Study setting should start with line 60 (study conducted in large volume sites)

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\*\* Explain the breakdown of year of initiation (first group is 6 years, 2007–2012, second group is 4 years 2012–2015; third group is 3 years 2015–2017; last group 4 years, 2017–2020). What did you use to inform the time breakdown

\*\* Surprising that attrition was lower in younger clients vs. those 15+. The age breakdown you use for those <15 and 15+ might have skewed your results given the much smaller proportion of patients <15. Is 15 years of age considered the age of adulthood in Guinea? We might see a difference if the age cut off is 18 or 21 (i.e., <=18 for pediatric patients vs. >18 for adult patients).

### PLEASE COMMENT

**Q 4** Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes, the title is appropriate and does a good job clearly defining the type of study design, setting and target population.

**Q 5** Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes. However, suggest adding Guinea/Guinee as a key word

**Q 6** Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes; however, the paper could benefit from some copy editing for better flow of information.

**Q 7** Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

No.

**Q 8** Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?)

Yes. However, it appears that the majority of the citations are old (pre-2017). It might be helpful for the authors to update their list of references.

**QUALITY ASSESSMENT****Q 9** Originality**Q 10** Rigor**Q 11** Significance to the field**Q 12** Interest to a general audience**Q 13** Quality of the writing**Q 14** Overall scientific quality of the study**REVISION LEVEL****Q 15** Please make a recommendation based on your comments:

Minor revisions.