

Rebuttal Letter

HIV self-testing positivity rate and linkage to confirmatory testing and care: a telephone survey in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, and Senegal

Summary

I commend the work you have put into this important manuscript. I am ready to recommend it, but there is one typo I think the authors will want to fix before I send that out.

We sincerely thank you for your constructive and detailed feedback, and for all the time you have dedicated to reviewing our manuscript.

Please find below the point-by-point responses to your comments.

Comments

The authors have accidentally deleted a sentence in the discussion (Line 410):

“For instance, in 2020 an estimated 1.9% of all HIV tests performed were found to be positive in the region (95% credible intervals: 1.3 to 2.7%) [42].”

L376-379: *We have corrected the error, and the sentence is now as follows:*

“Overall, these results for HIVST positivity are generally higher than the average overall positivity of HIV testing services (excluding HIVST) in West Africa. For instance, in 2020 an estimated 1.9% of all HIV tests performed were found to be positive in the region (95% credible intervals: 1.3 to 2.7%) [42].”

There are also some additional minor issues, if they wish to take the time to adjust (but not required):

Table 1: “Based on self-interpreted test results” section : High possible rate —> Highest possible rate

Line 287: Thanks for your comment. We have corrected the error.

There are still issues with references. For instance, Reference 45 is still incomplete. What publication or website is this from? Again a search pulls up a conference poster. Here is an example guideline for citing a poster: <https://libguides.ecu.edu/c.php?g=982594&p=7463681> If the authors plan to publish in PCI Journal (which is a great option, since it will be immediately accepted), the references must include the doi where available.

We found a better reference for the poster. It is as follows:

“Anthony Vautier, Nicolas Rouveau, Sanata Diallo, Marinette Traore, Olivier Geoffroy, et al.. Is manufacturer’s Instructions-For-Use sufficient in a multilingual and low literacy context? The example of HIV self-testing in West Africa. INTEREST Workshop, Dec 2020, virtual conference, Netherlands. <https://hal.science/hal-04120869>.”

Re: 1,000 vs 1 000 : Word of advice: Don’t ever “please” reviewers if you can support a decision and are consistent. I live in France and work with WHO AFRO, I am aware of the convention. My issue was that I thought it was inconsistent and the authors had chosen “comma” rather than “space” separators. I was following the tracked-changes version and thought the commas were input rather than deleted (eg, in the first paragraph of the results). Please revert to “spaces” if the authors wish to take the opportunity to do so! Otherwise, it seems consistent now.

Thank you for your advice. Given that we have come to an understanding, we have opted for the use of a thin space as a thousands separator, as recommended by the official policy of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures.