

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

Title (Provisional)

An Assessment of Health System Responsiveness in Delivering HIV and AIDS Care Services at Urban Sites of Pakistan – A Protocol for Cross Sectional Study

Authors

Bilal, Muhammad; Mansoor, Javeria; Mahmood, Faisal

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

Reviewer	1
Name	Graves, Erin
Affiliation Medical Center	Vanderbilt Institute for Global Health, Vanderbilt University
Date	31-Dec-2024
COI	None

Congratulations to the authors for this well-prepared protocol paper. Overall, recommend to accept for publication. However, please include the intended dates of the study in the protocol manuscript to provide greater context for the readers/audience. Also recommend revision for some minor grammar/language errors throughout the text.

Reviewer	2
Name	Ngalesoni, Frida
Affiliation	Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences
Date	27-Mar-2025
COI	None

Methods sections needs more work. First the purposeful sampling and the use of patients who already attend ART clinics introduce bias. Authors should consider better sampling techniques and if possible conduct survey. Second, there is no mention of anticipated explanatory variables to be assessed through regression analysis. The abstract indicates that

this is an observational cross-sectional study which from the methods section does not seem to be so.

VERSION 1 - AUTHOR RESPONSE

S. #	Recommendations:	Investigators' Responses:
	Reviewer 1:	
1.	Include the intended dates of the study in the protocol manuscript to provide greater context for the readers/audience.	From July 2025 to July 2026 added in the protocol
2.	Also recommend revision for grammar/language	Grammatic changes have been made
	Reviewer 2:	
3.	First the purposeful sampling and the use of patients who already attend ART clinics introduce bias. Authors should consider better sampling techniques and if possible conduct survey.	<p>Thank you for the valuable feedback. We acknowledge the concern regarding purposeful sampling. However, given that this study aims to assess health system responsiveness, it is most appropriate to recruit individuals who are already engaged with HIV/AIDS care services. These individuals are best positioned to reflect on their experiences and perceptions of the health system's responsiveness.</p> <p>Including newly diagnosed individuals or those not yet linked to care could limit the accuracy and relevance of responses, as they may not have had sufficient exposure to the healthcare system to evaluate its responsiveness meaningfully. Additionally, given the low overall HIV prevalence in the general population and the concentrated nature of the epidemic in Pakistan, it would be logistically challenging and inefficient to sample individuals not yet enrolled in care.</p> <p>Therefore, our focus remains on a population that is both marginalized and actively receiving services, to ensure the validity and feasibility of the study objectives.</p>
4.	Anticipated explanatory variables to be assessed through regression analysis.	Thank you for your comment. We anticipate assessing a range of explanatory variables through regression analysis to explore their

		association with health system responsiveness and will include participants' age in years, gender, and sex at birth, along with whether they currently identify with the same sex assigned at birth. Relationship status will also be assessed, including whether the participant is in a stable relationship, marital status, years of marriage, number of wives, and whether they have another partner in a stable relationship. Additionally, the study will capture knowledge of the partner's HIV status, and if known, the specific HIV status of the partner. Other variables will include the number of children, education level, religion, occupation, and monthly income.
5.	The abstract indicates that this is an observational cross-sectional study	Thank you for pointing that out. To clarify, this is an analytical cross-sectional study . Correction has been made in the abstract as well