Reviewer's report

Title: Using verbal autopsy to track epidemic dynamics: the case of HIV-related mortality in South Africa

Version: 1 Date: 13 April 2011

Reviewer: Bruce Neal

Reviewer's report:

This is a very well written paper on an interesting topic. I have little by way of comment.

The only point that might warrant some further explanation is the 'high/low' setting for HIV in your model. It seems to me a bit circular. You set it to high if you know HIV is high but to know that you have to have the cause specific mortality fraction for HIV. Which is what the model is designed to give you.

Fig 2 doesn't look good in black and white. You might want to use different line formats to allow for interpretation of non-colour printouts.

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 have no conflicts in regard to this paper and my review of it