



The Centre for Sexual Health and HIV AIDS  
Research (CeSHHAR) Zimbabwe  
4 Bath Road, Belgravia  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
Phone: (04) 333393/332074

---

30 April 2021

The Editor  
BMJ Global Health

Dear Editor

**Re: Submission of research article titled “Relative efficiency of demand creation strategies to increase voluntary medical male circumcision uptake – A study conducted as part of a randomised controlled trial in Zimbabwe”**

**Whose sister article is titled “Innovative demand creation strategies to increase voluntary medical male circumcision uptake: a randomised controlled trial in Zimbabwe” (bmjgh-2020-004775) – currently under review.**

We are submitting our manuscript for consideration for publication in BMJ Global Health. This and the sister paper are part of the Self-Test Africa (STAR) supplement - **Innovating with HIV self-testing in a changing epidemic: Results from the STAR (Self-Testing Africa) Initiative.**

In an environment characterised by dwindling funding for HIV prevention a key concern is longer-term financial sustainability of VMMC programming. We assessed relative efficiency of demand creation approaches as part of a 2x2 factorial randomised controlled trial (RCT) comparing arms with and without two interventions: i) standard demand creation augmented by human centred design (HCD)-informed approach; ii) standard demand creation plus offer of HIV self-testing (HIVST) in Zimbabwe. There was high variability in unit costs across arms and sites suggesting opportunities for cost reductions. Highest costs per client reached and circumcised were observed in the HCD+HIVST arm when combined with an integrated service-delivery setting where circumcision numbers were lower. Despite incurring similarly high demand creation activity-related costs, standard mobilisation and HCD arms had lower unit costs as they had a higher proportion of clients reached and circumcised.

Mobilisation programmes that intensively target higher conversion rates provide greater scope for efficiency by spreading costs. We believe the findings will be of considerable interest to the broader research community and can help inform future design and implementation of demand creation interventions and other health services interventions including those relevant to men.

Yours sincerely

Collin Mangenah