Title: THE PRINCIPLE OF COOPERATION IN CONFIDENTIAL WITHHOLDINGS OF HIV SEROPOSITIVE STATUS FROM PARTNERS OF SEXUALLY ACTIVE PATIENTS WHO DO NOT INTEND TO DISCLOSE: A ROLE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL MORAL AGENCY

Comments of Reviewer 1:  
  
1. The paper is important, especially for LMICs such as India, since it addresses the issue of confidentiality from within the junction of the right to individual privacy, clinical ethics, and the nascent field of organizational ethics, which is currently poorly represented in the literature.   
  
2. The issue is both topical and relevant. It is discussed from a perspective of the moral as well as the contextual, and this makes it relevant to all cultures.  
  
 3. Regarding influence on practice or policy, the Indian policy on confidentiality for HIV infected people (HIV/AIDS Act 2017), is already a well-thought out piece of legislation and adequately addresses issues related to confidentiality rights of individuals.

However, this paper will help to frame SoPs on the basis of organizational and clinical ethics, that are rarely addressed in India.  
  
4.  Though not too specialized for the journal, it needs to be written more simply. Several sentences are too convoluted.

5. The information given is not particularly new, but the perspective from which it is argued is, because it overlaps the terrains of individual rights, moral responsibility, clinical ethics, and organizational ethics. The sections on organizational ethics provide a clear overview of the issues involved, and this is an addition to this nascent field, at least in India.

6. The interpretation is well developed, but empirical evidence on the issues discussed could be make this paper more robust.

Comments of Reviewer 2:

1. Disclosure of the seropositive status of sexually active HIV infected individuals to their partners is still a major concern in the prevention of HIV. Since self-disclosure does not happen most of the time, partner notification is made mandatory by the public health authorities. In this context, the paper is relevant since it addresses ethical challenges in disclosure of seropositive status of sexually active HIV infected individuals with their partners.

2. The issue addressed is relevant for bioethics and medical ethics in developing countries. But the literature and discussion is focused on experience in United States. The burden of HIV is high in Asia and African countries. It will be useful if the author also discuss the experiences related to disclosure in Asian and African countries. The author can elaborate how the experiences from US regarding partner notification can be adopted in resource-limited settings.

3. Ethical issues surrounding disclosure of HIV status to partners are widely debated in bioethics literature. This paper explores the role of an organization in the disclosure.

4. WHO already recommends partner notification as a tool to improve the HIV testing coverage, reduce stigma, increase social support and increase the early referral to care and treatment. The paper needs to elaborate the policy implications of this ethical analysis. How it will make an impact on HIV prevention, care, treatment and support programs in high burden settings?

5. The paper is presently too specialized and too lengthy for the journal. The paper can be published if it is shortened from the present 9192 words to about 3000 words. The ethical analysis can be simplified in a language, which can be easily be understood, by clinicians, program managers and policy makers

6. The paper could be re-written from a global perspective with due consideration to developing country contexts. The author may elaborate how experience from US can be adopted in settings with limited resources and high burden of HIV.

7. Literature from Asian and African countries should be included such as that mentioned below.

<http://www.who.int/hiv/pub/vct/Annex24.pdf>

<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42717/9241590734_summary.pdf;jsessionid=A04AAAF0681312C0C97CB1160CC8F9B3?sequence=2>

<http://ijme.in/articles/confidentiality-partner-notification-and-hiv-infection/?galley=html>

<http://ijme.in/articles/ethics-in-human-resource-management-potential-for-burnout-among-healthcare-workers-in-art-and-community-care-centres/>

<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0163594>