

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-54527

Date: 27/10/2025

Title: Social and Structural Drivers of HIV Risk among High-Risk Populations in Aizawl City, Mizoram

Recommendation:

- ✓ Accept as it is
 Accept after minor revision.....
 Accept after major revision
 Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality		✓		
Clarity		✓		
Significance	✓			

Reviewer Name: Dr. S. K. Nath

Date: 28/10/2025

Reviewer's Comment for Publication:

This research provides valuable insight into how social and spatial inequalities underpin HIV vulnerabilities among high-risk groups in Mizoram. Its strength lies in integrating social, structural, and spatial analyses, highlighting the importance of environment-specific interventions. However, the paper would benefit from more detailed quantitative results, expanded discussion of existing literature, and clearer language. Addressing these weaknesses would considerably strengthen its contribution to the field.

Reviewer's Comment / Report

Strengths:

- Comprehensive Contextual Analysis:** The paper effectively situates HIV vulnerability within the social, economic, and spatial dimensions specific to Aizawl City, emphasizing the importance of structural factors beyond individual behaviors. This holistic approach enriches understanding and offers valuable insights for targeted interventions.
- Focus on High-Risk Populations:** The targeted examination of Injecting Drug Users (IDUs) and Female Sex Workers (FSWs)—groups central to the HIV epidemic—enhances the relevance and specificity of the study, making its findings particularly actionable.
- Methodological Rarity and Clarity:** The cross-sectional design, involving in-depth face-to-face interviews with semi-structured questionnaires, is appropriate for capturing nuanced social and behavioral factors. Collaboration with targeted intervention programs adds credibility and feasibility to the sampling process.
- Use of Spatial and Social Dimensions:** The analysis of spatial exclusion and neighborhood-level risks (e.g., Dawrpui and Venghlui) provides valuable geospatial insights, essential for spatially sensitive intervention planning.

Weaknesses:

- Limited Quantitative Analysis Details:** While the paper mentions the use of descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, it lacks detailed statistical results, measures of association, or rigorous quantification of variables such as prevalence rates or risk ratios, which would strengthen the analytical rigor.
- Small FSW Sample Size:** The FSW group comprises only 22 participants, which limits the generalizability of findings concerning this key population. The authors acknowledge challenges in reaching this group, but additional strategies or justification for the sample size would be beneficial.
- Incomplete Reference to Literature:** Although some references are listed, the review of existing literature could be more extensive, particularly regarding spatial and structural factors influencing HIV risk in similar contexts, to better frame the study's novelty.

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4. **Clarity and Language:** Minor grammatical and typographical errors are present, such as inconsistent punctuation and some awkward sentence constructions. Improving language clarity would enhance readability.

Recommendations for the Author:

- Provide more detailed statistical analyses, including prevalence rates, risk factors, and potential associations.
- Expand the literature review to include more contextual studies on spatial and structural determinants of HIV risk.
- Clarify certain sentences for smoother readability, and perform careful proofreading to correct minor grammatical and typographical errors.
- Justify the small sample size of FSWs more thoroughly or discuss how this limitation impacts findings.