RE: Molecular screening for Neisseria gonorrhoeae antimicrobial resistance markers in Nigerian men who have sex with men and transgender women

Sir,

I read the outcome of the molecular screening for Neisseria gonorrhoeae antimicrobial resistance markers in the TRUST/RV368 Study Group¹ with interest. I must commend the group for being able to obtain Ethics committee approval and recruit men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people in Nigeria, where men having sex with men is considered an “unnatural offence”² punishable by 14 years imprisonment if convicted. This is equally exacerbated by the Same-Sex-Marriage Prohibition Act of 2013,³ which does not recognise same-sex marriage and infraction incurs a prison term of 14 years.

In 2017, there were 1164 individuals reported for committing “unnatural offences” by the Police in Nigeria,⁴ the highest prevalence being in the study recruitment sites of Lagos (n = 269; 23%) and Federal Capital Territory (n = 41; 3.5%). See Figure 1 showing the reported “unnatural offence” rate in the rest of the 36 states of the country.

The TRUST/RV368 Study Group findings highlight the unmet needs of MSM and transgender people in Nigeria, including the absence of dedicated sexual

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Figure 1. Map showing the details of the “unnatural offence” rate in 36 states of the country.
health services. Extrapolating the data from the “unnatural offence” reported rates, which may be the tip of the iceberg, the advocacy for suitably-resourced laboratories as observed by the TRUST/RV368 Study Group becomes germane.

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