Reviewer's report

Title: Mobile phone text messaging interventions for HIV and other chronic diseases: an overview and framework for evidence transfer

Version: 3
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Reviewer: David Finitsis

Reviewer's report:

The authors report on a "meta-review" (a review of reviews) of text-messaging interventions to promote health outcomes in PLWH and present a "conceptual framework" for transfer of these interventions to the management of other disease processes within the PLWH population and beyond to the general population. I believe the authors are tackling a very important subject within behavioral medicine: how to translate the successes within one field of study and generalize their gains more broadly for greater benefit. I applaud the authors for seeking to cast light upon this issue; however, the certain areas of the manuscript appear underdeveloped and this limits its value in its current form.

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. Title: For the sake of clarity, somewhere in the title, the authors should share that this is a systematic review of reviews.

2. page 4, line 17: Given that you are seeking open-access publication, you may have a broad readership: providing more background and perhaps some examples of the NCDs you're referring to here would better paint a picture for readers who may not be so well versed in this subject as it pertains to this population. For example, you may consider including some prevalence data on the more common NCDs in sub-Saharan Africa.

3. "The commonality between all the text messaging interventions is enhanced communication between health care providers and consumers." This is an important insight and I strongly suggest developing this further for the purpose of the proposed conceptual framework.

4. page 25, line 5: do you mean that HIV management itself promotes comorbid conditions (e.g., ART contributing to kidney disease) or do you mean that as people live longer because of ARTs, they will live long enough to be at risk for cancer diabetes etc. Judging from the rest of the paper, I suspect it's the latter, but the language is a little unclear. If it's the latter, please consider rewording this sentence to something like, "...will likely result in an increasing prevalence of concurrent..."

5. Content: " However, there is no reason to suspect that a text messaging intervention will cost more for NCDs compared to HIV."

Comment: p. 16, line 5: this idea could be further developed. Certainly a text message costs the same regardless of the disease it references, but could there
be a cumulative economic impact as more messages go out about more illnesses? What about impact on efficacy via texting fatigue? Will patients habituate to receiving texts thereby robbing them of their efficacy? This also needs to be investigated, but is not addressed in your discussion.

6. page 16, the conceptual model. This paragraph is too sparse. Given that the whole point of this manuscript is to articulate a conceptual framework for transfer from HIV to NCDs, much more elucidation is necessary. Figure 3 does not succeed in supplying this additional clarity (see below). The development of this conceptual framework may be further hampered by its atheoretical approach. I won't suggest specific theories, but hanging the proposed transfer on the existing framework of a relevant theory may assist the authors' efforts and truly take this paper from being a review of reviews to becoming a fully articulated plan for translation of a successful behavioral intervention from one field of study to healthcare more broadly, which is how the paper will have its greatest benefit within (and beyond) the field.

7. page 18. Given that authors' observation of a lack of economic analysis in this area, it's surprising that a recommendation for economic evaluations of text messaging interventions appears to be missing.

8. page 18, line 19. Please consider elaborating on what harms if any the authors have in mind here

9. Figure 3 needs significant revision: the connections among the balloons is too unclear making the figure as a whole difficult to read and of limited value as currently designed. More detail and clarity is needed here.

Minor Essential Revisions
1. page 2, line 10 add "a" between "conducted" and "systematic
2. page 13, line 5 correct grammatical error in sentence
3. Page 15, of pdf
Content: "determine if an interventions is suitable"
Comment: correct grammar
4. Page 16 of pdf
Content: "seems to a factor"
Comment: grammar error

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 declare that I have no competing interests