Title: Implementation strategies to improve cervical cancer prevention in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review

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Reviewer: Grazia Antonacci

Reviewer's report:

Ms. Ref. No.: IMPS-D-17-0033

Title: Implementation strategies to improve cervical cancer prevention in sub-Saharan Africa: a systematic review.

This paper describes a systematic review exploring implementation strategies used in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to implement and sustain cervical cancer prevention programs.

The systematic review has been conducted and reported according to the PRISMA methodology. 40 peer reviewed studies (describing the empirical testing or evaluation of implementation strategies to improve cervical cancer prevention in SSA) were eligible for inclusion.

Findings suggest that the use of multiple implementation strategies can help to improve the effectiveness of these interventions (e.g. pay attention to organizational support alongside educational interventions).

The paper outlines results of interest, which suggest the need to improve the way in which cervical cancer prevention interventions are implemented in SSA. This research shows directions to enhance the implementation and relative reporting of evidence-based practices into clinical and organizational local contexts. Hence, this work fits well with the Implementation Science's fields of interests and I recommend the acceptance of the paper after minor revisions.

The contribution of this work to research and practice is twofold:

(i) It is the first systematic review reporting on implementation strategies for cervical cancer prevention in SSA, (ii) it uncovers the breath of different implementation strategies used (as described by the literature) thus providing researchers, practitioners, managers and policy makers with new ideas to improve practice and evaluate current and future interventions, (iii) it provides practical advice to improve the implementations of these interventions, such as the need to diversify the implementation strategies used for each intervention.
Rather than focus on the obvious strengths of the manuscript, which make this research a valuable work to be spread within the scientific community, I also have some comments that I describe below. I really hope that these comments will be helpful to revise the paper.

A. Abstract - I think that in the Methods section should be more comprehensive of the whole process (from the search strategy to the reporting of results). In doing this within the limited space available, author could provide only few details about the selection process (which is well described in the text) and briefly describe the rest of the study process.

B. Methodology -
- Line 145-147: maybe it divide this paragraph in 2 sentences: 1) about the iterative development of inclusion/exclusion criteria and 2) about the type of study selected (in this respect could you please specify what do you mean for discrete implementation strategies?).
- Maybe it could be better to move here the information provided in the "Limitations" section (372-376) about "who"(researcher 1, researcher 2, etc.) performed the single stages of the review and how consensus was reached for the different stages (definition of eligibility criteria, study selection, data extraction, data analysis, summary of findings). You can also mention this briefly in the limitation section.- According to general guidelines to report on literature review a description of how data extracted have been analyzed and summarized (e.g. descriptive, using ratios, etc.) should be provided.

C. Results -
Line 182-183: I don't think author need to state that that all articles are in English and peer reviewed, as it was an inclusion criteria.

C. Discussion
I think that the discussion on Implementation science (lines 300-309) could be shortened and narrowed to the focus of the present review.

In this respect maybe it would be helpful to mention some other study (literature review) about implementation strategies for prevention of cervical cancer in other settings (other countries/regions)- if they exist (?) - and compare their findings with the findings of the present study.
Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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