Author's response to reviews

Title: Prevalence, awareness, and associated risk factors of hypertension in older adults in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis protocol

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Author’s response to reviews:

Title

1. I suggest to revise the title as follows: "Prevalence, awareness, and associated risk factors of hypertension in older adults in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis protocol". The authors need to remove 'treatment' and 'control' terms from the title. The reason being that these are different constructs, which need separate searches. I am not convinced that included studies will systematically cover these constructs. Besides, the authors barely cover these issues in the methodology of protocol. Ideally, 'treatment' and 'control' should be discussed as much as 'prevalence' by providing their definitions and ways to measure/ascertain them. I suggest to drop these terms. Not sure why the authors removed 'associated risk factors' from the title. If they are keen on keeping 'awareness' why not 'associated risk factors'?

Title revised as suggested.

Revised: Lines 1-2

"Prevalence, awareness, and associated risk factors of hypertension in older adults in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis protocol"

2. Regarding 'awareness' and 'risk factors', the authors may mention this as a limitation to caution that these terms will not be systematically searched.

We have mentioned the non-inclusion of 'awareness' and 'risk factors' in the search terms as a limitation.
We have revised the abstract, review question, inclusion criteria and data extraction accordingly to exclude mention of treatment and blood pressure control.

Revised: Lines 325-326

As with other reviews [21, 44, 70], we do not specifically include 'awareness' and 'risk factors' in the search terms.

Abstract: lines 33-35; 51-52; 58

We therefore present this protocol to conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis on the prevalence of hypertension and the level of its awareness among older persons living in Africa.

The estimates of the prevalence, the risk factors and the level of awareness of hypertension could help in galvanizing efforts at prioritizing the cardiovascular health of older

Keywords: Older adults; Hypertension; Risk factors; Determinants; Awareness; Africa

Revised: Line 156

What is the level of awareness of high blood pressure among older adults in Africa

Revised: Lines 179-180

Secondary outcomes include the grades of hypertension, the proportion of hypertensives detected and the presence of co-morbidities

Methods - data analysis and synthesis

3. The following sentence (Line 286): "We will perform a sensitivity analysis to examine the effect of excluding studies with high risk of bias on the overall prevalence and relationships" needs to be placed right after the sentence on subgroup analysis and before 'reporting bias' (Line 302)

The suggested re-structuring has been done

Revised: Lines 297-299

We will perform a sensitivity analysis to examine the effect of excluding studies with high-risk of bias on the overall prevalence and relationships.

4. The following sentence (Line 289-292): "The prevalence will be summarised using as a proportion prevalence and summary measures of risk factor-hypertension association presented
as odds ratios" should be moved up to Line 286 to follow the sentence: "The prevalence data and risk factors from the different studies will be summarised using narrative synthesis."

The suggested re-structuring has been done

Revised: Lines 283-284

The prevalence will be summarised using as a proportion and summary measures of risk factor-hypertension association presented as odds ratios.