Author’s response to reviews

Title: Mapping evidence on the distribution of Human Papillomavirus related cancers in sub-Saharan Africa: Scoping Review Protocol

Authors:

Bridget K.M Lekoane (lekoane.bridgette@gmail.com)

Tivani P. Mashamba-Thompson (Mashamba-Thompson@ukzn.ac.za)

Themba G Ginindza (Ginindza@ukzn.ac.za)

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RESPONSES TO REVIEWERS

REFERENCE: SYSR-D-17-00134

MANUSCRIPT TITLE: The distribution of Human Papillomavirus related cancers in sub-Saharan Africa: Systematic Scoping Review

REVIEWER # 1

Comment 1

Please try to organize English editing

Response

The manuscript was edited by an English native professor in our department

Comment 2

1: is the question posed original, important and well defined?

Yes but:

it would be good to expand a bit on how the results could be used to achieve any intervention or preventive measure in the region
Response

The reviewer’s comment was acknowledged. The usage of the results was expanded on page 8 lines 208-215

Comment 3

The first question "what is the relationship between HPV types and cancer" -> this question has already been extensively documented…I don't think this is necessary to redo the work, unless you want to investigate the frequency in sub-Saharan Africa. Then state it clearly;

I think that four questions (lines 91-94) is too much for only one review; please choose the two firsts or the two lasts because you could get lost as these questions are very different and require different discussions

Response

The reviewer’s suggestion was acknowledged. The three chosen questions are enlisted on page 4 lines 93-95.

Question no 2 was kept because we will be looking at other possible risk factors of HPV-related cancers which might be predisposing to acquire HPV and increase the risk of HPV-related cancers.

Comment 4

2. Are the data sound and well controlled?

NA

Comment 5

3. Is the interpretation (discussion and conclusion) well balanced and supported by the data?

I think that you should present the results to a group of experts through a consultation or several interviews to be sure about the effect of the contexts and the practice.
Response

Results will be presented through a consultation of experts. It’s elaborated in stage six on page 7, line 155

Comment 6

4. Are the methods appropriate and well described, and are sufficient details provided to allow others to evaluate and/or replicate the work?

The methods are well described but

(1) I regret that the consultation has not been added to the methods; I strongly recommend the researchers to organize the consultation step, as described by Arksey and O'Malley; this is the main added value of scoping studies, making them more "practical"

Response

As per recommendation, consultation stage was included on page 7, lines 155-161

Comment 7

(2) I think that you need to think about the designs of the included studies, because having different designs will make very difficult the interpretation of the results; you cannot compare or pull RCTs, systematic reviews and observational studies…what will you do if they report contradictions? To solve this, you do have two choices:

1. You do focus on only one type of designs

2. You decide to give a weight to each included study (weighting procedures are available in the literature)

Response

A scoping review allows for different study designs since the synthesis is narrative. Meta-analysis and meta-synthesis will not be conducted at this stage of the study
Comment 8

Lines 106-107: are you going to include only peer reviewed publications? WHO reports national (official) reports for Ministries could be very helpful also…grey literature could also help when data are missing.

Response

Corrections were made on the studies to be included on page 5 lines 103-106

Comment 9

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methods?

See my recommendations just above

Response

Recommendations were noted.

Comment 10

Also, as your PICO is quite clear, you could add the TRIP database to the list of your search engines

Response

The suggestion is acknowledged. But TRIP and EMBASE databases will not be added on the list of databases to avoid having studies with many duplicates.

Comment 11

6. Can the writing, organization, tables and figures be improved?

Response

Suggestion noted, tables and figures were improved on page 4, line 99-100, page 6 line 129 and page 7 lines 147. There is a separate attachment of figure 1, which is the PRISMA flow diagram.

Comment 12
Some sections are difficult to read/understand.

E.g. page 7, paragraph V, lines 158-162->please pay attention and we-write

Response

# on page paragraph V, page 7, lines 149-154 was we-written

Comment 13

7. Are there any ethical or competing interests issues you would like to raise

Authors need to disclose who the funders of the study are; it would help to better understand why this study is needed (to which purpose)

Response

There are no ethical or competing interests’ issues. The study is for master’s degree. The fund application was made, still awaiting response.

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Comment 1

It is clear that this protocol is on the right track, but I would encourage authors to add considerably more detail along several points. In addition, please look at the MOOSE reporting guideline for some suggestions on issues relevant to systematic reviews of epidemiological studies as well

Response

MOOSE reporting guideline was checked for suggestions, and it gave clarity on few things related to systematic reviews.

Comment 2

Please attach a completed PRSIMA-P checklist. The sequencing of your methods section could be improved to clarify how the review will occur.
Response

The PRISMA-P checklist is completed and it will be attached with the manuscript

Comment 3

EBSCOHost is a platform, not a search engine. You should also search Embase.

Response

Mistake noted and it was corrected on page 5, line 105

Comment 3

You should provide a search string for at least one database exactly as run.

Response

The search string was included on page 12 line 249

Comment

I would suggest doing the search and selection in several stages: first, duplicate records; then, search on title and abstract; and then, assessment of full text.

Response

Suggestion is appreciated, the search will be started

Comment 5

The PICOS framework is not enough to clarify which studies you will include. Please elaborate on this in the text.
Response

The clarity of the studies to be included is on page 6, lines 123-128

Comment 6

Synthesis methods are lacking. How will you undertake the thematic synthesis, and how will this reflect the different aspects of your review question? How will you assess publication bias? Is there a reason you have ruled out meta-analysis for quantitative studies?

Response

This is a systematic scoping review not a mixed-method systematic review. The main objective of this study is to map current literature on the proposed topic in order to reveal research gaps and guide future primary research, including systematic review and meta-analysis of quantitative studies. Although, the review will include a synthesis section, a narrative synthesis will be conducted using thematic analysis. The outcomes listed in the PICO table will be used as themes.