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)

Version: 2 Date: 21 Sep 2017

Author’s response to reviews:

RESPONSES TO REVIEWERS

REFERENCE: SYSR-D-17-00134

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

Comment 1

--The Abstract is not closely harmonized with the text.

Response

The abstract was re-written, on page 2 lines 13-17

Comment 2

--change 'systemic' to 'systematic'.
Response
Thank you, comment noted, it was changed on page 3, in line 61

Comment 3

--Instead of using PICOS, use population/exposure/outcome/measurement and please provide considerably more detail on each of these points.

Response
Already piloted a search and PICOS was used as a search guide.

Comment 4

--EBSCO is still described as a database. I would strongly suggest searching Embase as well.

Response
Comment was noted, the mistake was rectified. A search has already been done at this stage, it will not be possible to add Embase.

Comment 5

--Tables 2 and 3 do not add to the text. I would suggest adding a sample extraction form as an appendix, but that is up to you.

Response
Suggestion noted, sample data extraction form included on page 12, line 246
Comment 6
--What exactly is the role for qualitative research in this review? Your use of a mixed-methods appraisal tool would suggest that you are planning on including qualitative papers but this is unclear currently.

Response
This is a scoping review aimed at revealing research gaps (including gaps in study designs) to guide future research (primary studies and systematic reviews). Unlike systematic reviews and meta-analysis or meta-synthesis, scoping review are exploratory in nature. For this reason, we would like to include all research study designs. The quality of studies will be assessed using the mixed method tool because this is more suitable for this type of study design. This tool will enable us to assess the quality of included studies according to their study designs.

Comment 7
--I would strongly suggest not including summary scores in your appraisal.

Response
Suggestion noted, summary scores will not be included

Comment 8
2. Are the data sounds and well controlled?

Response
Yes, data will be collected as required by systematic reviews.

Comment 9
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

A pilot search was conducted and there are enough articles which will answer the research question. There is no need for consultation step to be included at this stage. The step will be included if there is no enough evidence after compiling the result

Comment 10

(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

This doesn't solve the issue: what will you if two studies report different/contradictory results? If you do want to include all types of designs, you need to "rank" the included studies. Even in the narrative, some would have more power/weight than others…

Second response

This is a scoping review aimed at revealing research gaps (including gaps in study designs) to guide future research (primary studies and systematic reviews). Unlike systematic reviews and meta-analysis or meta-synthesis, scoping review are exploratory in nature. For this reason, we would like to include all research study designs. The quality of studies will be assessed using the mixed method tool because this is more suitable for this type of study design. This tool will enable us to assess the quality of included studies according to their study designs.
Comment 11

In the abstract, you do mention that TRIP and EMBASE will be searched, but not in the following (lines 105-107).

Response

It was a mistake to include it, it has been corrected on page 5 line 95-99

Comment 12

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

Response

as indicated improvement was made for tables on page 6 lines 124-125 and page 7 lines 142-143. PRISMA checklist as additional file 1 and PRISMA flow diagram as additional file 2, both are attached separately.

Comment 13

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 The use of the following terms should be revised/clarified: data, results, findings.

E.g.: "Data will be extracted (...)", do you means numbers? Data can be extracted from database, not from articles… please pay attention to the terminology used, it could be confusing and one can assume that you also plan to work with numbers. (Unless that you plan to do a meta-analysis, but from what you wrote above, I understood that you do not)

Response

Paragraph V, page 7-8 lines 153-158 was rectified.