Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 27 Jun 2017

Reviewer: Regine Mbengi

Reviewer's report:

Please try to organize an English editing

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

- 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

2. Are the data sound and well controlled?

NA

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.

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"

(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)

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.

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

See my recommendations just above

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

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

Some sections are difficult to read/understand.

E.g. page 7, paragraph V, lines 158-162 -> please pay attention and re-write it
7. Are there any ethical or competing interests issues you would like to raise?

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

Level of interest
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

Needs some language corrections before being published

Declaration of competing interests
Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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If you can answer no to all of the above, write 'I declare that I have no competing interests' below. If your reply is yes to any, please give details below.
No

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