Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 06 Sep 2017

Reviewer: Regine Mbengi

Reviewer's report:

Comment 1

Please try to organize English editing

Response

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

Ok

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

Ok

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.

Ok

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

Ok
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

Ok

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

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…
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

Ok

Comment 9
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the methods?

See my recommendations just above

Response
Recommendations were noted.

Ok

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.

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

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

E.g.: "Data will be extracted (...)", do you mean 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)

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.

Ok
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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