Reviewer's report

Title: Prevalence and incidence of major depressive disorders among people living with HIV residing in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis protocol

Version: 0 Date: 06 Nov 2017

Reviewer: Ashraf kagee

Reviewer's report:

SYSR-D-17-00206: Prevalence and incidence of major depressive disorders among people living with HIV residing in Africa: a systematic review and meta-analysis protocol.

This is an important proposal that will systematically document the prevalence and incidence of major depression among persons living with HIV in Africa. I have a concern though that Africa is treated as a single area when in fact the continent is quite diverse and multi-cultural. I think this needs to be acknowledged in the review. There should also be a strong motivation for why Africa is the continental catchment area for the proposed review. So far this is poorly motivated.

One of the major issues in the assessment of depression and other mental disorders is the difference between self-report questionnaires and clinician-administered diagnostic interviews, which usually yield quite different prevalence estimates. The authors need to have a way of managing these fluctuating estimates as diagnostic interviews have more stringent criteria than self-report instruments, leading to lower prevalence estimates than the latter.

Another problem is that some countries such as South Africa or Nigeria may have more research than others, due to better resources. Thus there will be a greater weight of research in these countries compared to poorer countries such as Malawi or Mozambique.

The proposed search strategy is appropriate.

I think appraisal of methodological quality is well-considered in the proposal.

There are some grammatical and typographical errors in the paper which I think should be rectified.

I think the proposal requires a statistical review.
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:

1. Have you in the past five years received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

2. Do you hold any stocks or shares in an organisation that may in any way gain or lose financially from the publication of this manuscript, either now or in the future?

3. Do you hold or are you currently applying for any patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

4. Have you received reimbursements, fees, funding, or salary from an organization that holds or has applied for patents relating to the content of the manuscript?

5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

6. Do you have any non-financial competing interests in relation to this paper?

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.

I declare that I have no competing interests

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal. I understand that my name will be included on my report to the authors and, if the manuscript is accepted for publication, my named report including any attachments I upload will be posted on the website along with the authors' responses. I agree for my report to be made available under an Open Access Creative Commons CC-BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). I understand that any comments which I do not wish to be included in my named report can be included as confidential comments to the editors, which will not be published.

I agree to the open peer review policy of the journal