Author’s response to reviews

Title: A Systematic Review Protocol of Stigma among Children and Adolescents with Epilepsy

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A Systematic Review Protocol of Stigma among Children and Adolescents with Epilepsy

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December 6, 2018

Dear editor,

RE: RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS’ COMMENTS.

We appreciate the opportunity given to us to publish our protocol with your precious journal. We are also very grateful for the continuous support and feedback, which has helped us to improve the quality of our review protocol. Below are our responses to reviewers’ comments.
1. P2 line 41-42. ‘Google Scholar’ is not considered to be a database so it would be more accurate to describe the search as follows in the abstract:

We will search for literature in PubMed, EMBASE, PsycINFO, and CINAHL databases as well as grey literature. We will also search via Google Scholar to capture relevant literature that may not be in the searched databases.

We have described the search as suggested above.

2. P2 line 50-51 Abstracts should not include references so consider rewriting as:

Bias will be assessed using a critical appraisal tool developed for prevalence studies.

We have re-written as suggested above.

3. P2 line 55-56 It would be preferential to not use ‘/’ symbols in the final manuscript. Please consider either replacing ‘reduce/tackle’ with ‘address’, or just using ‘reduce’

We have eliminated the symbol and replaced “reduce/tackle” with “address”

4. P2 line 58-59. Reword as:

The systematic review has PROSPERO registry number: CRD42017058957

We have reworded this sentence.

5. P3 line 91-94. This is a complex sentence. Consider re-writing as:

A number of factors have been found to influence stigma of epilepsy among children and adults including duration of illness, seizure frequency19, severity and type of illness22, gender and age of child13, antiepileptic medication side effects, lower self-efficacy for seizure management and having epilepsy related injuries7,22.

We have rewritten the sentence as suggested above.

6. P3 line 94-95. This sentence doesn’t make sense. Should there be a ‘are’ in between factors and associated – i.e. ‘above factors are associated with stigma of epilepsy’. The sentence
contradicts the previous sentence which states that the listed factors influence epilepsy, so indicate they are associated. Please resolve this inconsistency.

This means that as some factors influence epilepsy vary from place to place as documented in various studies. Therefore, the reason for carrying out this review is to harmonize this discrepancy. This has been rephrased as “These factors have been found to vary from one place to another in various studies23”

7. P3 line 103. Consider replacing ‘perceived/felt’ with just ‘perceived’
We have made the replacement.

8. P3 line 106 consider replacing ‘commonest’ with ‘most common’
We have made the replacement.

9. P3 line 105 consider replacing ‘hence’ with ‘thus’ to reduce using the word ‘hence’ in several sentences close together
We have made the replacement.

10. P4 line 123-127 As per comment number 1 please consider rewriting search description as:
We will conduct electronic searches in PubMed (NLM), EMBASE (Elsevier), PsycINFO (APA) and CINAHL (EbscoHost) databases from the time of inception up to the time of the date of the last search for the systematic review. We shall search for grey literature from other sources such as students’ theses. We shall also search for further relevant studies via Google Scholar (Google). We shall search literature by title, abstract and key words.
We have made the changes.

11. P4 line 146-147. This sentence indicates that you plan to screen all of your search results by title, abstract and full text. This is unusual. Most reviewers screen by title and abstract in the first screening, and then move onto the second screening where they screen the full text of a smaller number of records that were not excluded in the first round. Perhaps this sentence needs changing to say:
Studies to be considered for inclusion in this review will be first screened by title and abstract and then by full text at a second screening stage.

We appreciate this very useful comment. We have made the changes.

12. P5 line 159 replace ‘perceived/felt stigma’ with ‘perceived’

We have made the replacement.

13. P6 line 196 consider rewriting the first sentence to indicate the critical appraisal’s appropriateness for prevalence studies:

All the studies will be assessed for bias using Munn et al.’s prevalence study critical appraisal tool30

We have made the changes.

Thank you.

Dr. Joseph Kirabira