Author’s response to reviews

Title: Challenges and Support for Quality of Life of Youths Living With HIV/AIDS in Schools and Larger Community in East Africa: A Systematic Review

Authors:

Emmanuel kimera (kimeraemma@yahoo.co.uk)
Sofie Vindevogel (sofie.vindevogel@hogent.be)
Jessica De Maeyer (jessica.demaeyer@hogent.be)
Didier Raynaert (didier.raynaert@hogent.be)
Anne-Me Engelen (anne-me.engelen@hogent.be)
Fred Nuwaha (nuwahaf@yahoo.co.uk)
John Rubaihayo (rubaihayoj@yahoo.co.uk)
Johan Bilsen (jahan.bilsen@vub.be)

Version: 3 Date: 11 Feb 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Reviewer #1:

I am now satisfied the authors have responded adequately to my suggestions.
Response
We sincerely thank you for your critical review that has led to the improvement of our manuscript to this level. Thank you very much.

Reviewer #2:

Authors have further improved their manuscript however some minor following points still need to be resolved to improve the quality of manuscript;
Response
Your critical review has enabled us to improve the manuscript. We therefore thank you very much.
Comment
1. Page 7, line 146; 'PRISMA' acronym requires full abbreviation and reference.
Response
The acronym PRISMA has been written in full (lines 146-147) and a reference has also been added to it (line 147). This however has changed all the reference numbers in the text.

Comment
2. PROSPERO explanation is also required in the first paragraph of the method section.
Response
We have included the explanation in the first paragraph of the methods section (lines 147-153).

Comment
3. Table 1, under study location/ setting column; authors need to present in the chronological order of either by year of publication or by alphabet in the author's name.
Response
Our experience in this regard is that the order depends on the journal and how in-text citations are made. The Cochrane reviews use the alphabetical order of authors’ names but they use (author, date) in-text citations. The BMC journals use numbers for in-text citation and therefore order review studies based on the ascending order of these numbers from the first cited to the last cited. We therefore chose this second approach because it is consistent with BMC referencing style and BMC reviews such as one below.


We have however made changes to the reference numbers in the table due to the inclusion of a reference on PRISMA

Comment
4. I'm not entirely agree with the authors the risk of bias (RoB) and quality of included studies decisions.
Response
We reported that Risk of Bias assessment was not done since it is not appropriate for qualitative studies and this is the case with all qualitative reviews. See Cochrane review by Glenton et al., 2013 [page 7] below.


With regards to the assessment of the quality of included studies, we explained the stance we took for excluding this assessment from the review as stated below
Critical appraisal of qualitative research is widely debated and currently no consensus exists on methods, tools and whether it should even be done [1 & 2]. In many studies such appraisal has not led to exclusion of papers from the synthesis [3-5]. [6] also noted that critical appraisal was more of an exercise of judging a written report and not the research process and it tends to favor papers published in qualitative oriented journals that allow lengthy papers that enable authors to elaborate on the research process [7 & 8]. On the backdrop of this, we did not include results of the critical appraisal but judged included studies to be of high quality because they were published papers in peer reviewed journals.


Comment
I think authors missed ENTREQ (used for generic assessment instrument)

Response
Enhancing transparency in reporting the synthesis of qualitative research (ENTREQ) aims at ensuring transparent reporting just like PRISMA statement. It also has a checklist similar to the PRISMA checklist. We chose to use PRISMA since it was recommended by Cochrane guidelines for both qualitative and quantitative reviews that we followed. Inclusion of ENTREQ checklist would lead to duplication of information.
Comment
ConQual (used for rating the confidence of qualitative systematic review findings),
Response
Confidence of qualitative evidence (ConQual) is used to rate review findings just like Certainty of qualitative evidence (CerQual) and Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE). Cochrane reviews use CerQual to rate review findings. The CerQual assessment is based on results of the critical appraisal (quality assessment). Since we did not include the quality assessment, we could not perform the CerQual assessment.

Comment
and COREQ guidelines (assesses reporting). Authors should go through above mentioned guidelines and provide comment if not useful at all for readers.
Response
The Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Studies (COREQ) is used to assess the quality of reporting in qualitative studies that use interviews and focus group discussions. It also has a checklist just like the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP). Systematic review authors use CASP and COREQ in different adaptations to assess quality of studies they include in the review. Since COREQ is limited to interviews and focus group discussions, CASP is more widely used.

Comment
It is also suggested to look at the Lockwood et al article published in Int. J. Evid. Based Healthc. 2015; 13: 179-187, for methodological guidance.
Response
We sincerely appreciate your recommendation for this article. We have examined it and found that it addresses meta-aggregation which is just one method of meta-synthesis in qualitative reviews. A number of other approaches exist such as meta-ethnography, framework synthesis, grounded theory and thematic synthesis. For our review, we used framework synthesis which we found more suitable to answer our review question as reported under data analysis (line 243).