Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 07 Jan 2019

Reviewer: Ruth Gwernan-Jones

Reviewer's report:

The authors have responded adequately to the initial reviewer comments, improving their reporting of methods and giving a rationale for their approach to analysis, and they have further developed their themes. I think this paper provides valuable information for those developing interventions to support youth living with HIV/AIDS in East Africa. My main comment has to do with the need for a few adaptations to reflect the change to theme structure in the abstract and introduction to the findings, and a few other minor points.

Line 309

I found this sentence confusing, I've suggested an adaption.

Suggested change:

"stigma linked to challenges identified across the themes of psychosocial wellbeing, disclosure of HIV status and treatment and health as shown in figure 2 below."

In the Discussion you address the need to consider stigma in relation to any intervention, but in looking back at the abstract the central nature of stigma in relation to the challenges, and the implications of this for any interventions for support, is not obvious. This seems an important finding and could be added to the abstract conclusion.

You state 'Two overarching themes based on study objectives were the basis for analysis' - did you mean 'the two study objectives of challenges and supports were the basis for analysis'? I wondered if the description of themes reflected the first manuscript version and not the second, isn't the current thematic structure 'Three overarching themes: Psychosocial wellbeing; disclosure of HIV status; and treatment and health; with a sub-theme of stigma that was important across the three overarching themes'
"The challenge is … they still have no partner. They are not like a couple. So, for them to freely come and say that "me I'm practicing sex" is still an issue" (male nursing officer, health center) 408 [54, p3].

I found this discussion and supportive extract a little confusing - the youth are not having sex? They are? Is their desire for contraception for the time in the future they might be having sex? Or, are they having sex, but avoid seeking contraception to prevent being discovered? In the extract, the male nurse states 'they are not like a couple' - yet the youths are having sex, so is this referring to sex between people who don't have a formal relationship, eg outside of marriage?

Maybe the text just needs to be framed a little differently - is it that access to contraceptives is ideal whether the youths are or are not sexually active, but youth commonly avoided seeking contraception for fear of stigma around being sexually active

Have you referred to this finding about SRH under 'psychosocial support' because SRH is supported within an emotionally supportive service? I appreciate addressing findings that link to more than one theme is difficult, but it is odd to see it without reference/link to the section above on SRH, where the finding was not mentioned. A cross-reference between sections would help, or you could move the paragraph to the section on SRH and cross reference psychosocial support

Health treatments theme

Wondered if the section on health treatments would be better reported higher up in the findings section, as the other themes refer to medication and this prepares the reader to better understand.
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