Author’s response to reviews

Title: Rehabilitation approaches for children living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa: a protocol for scoping review

Authors:

Verusia Chetty (chettyve@ukzn.ac.za)

Stacy Maddocks (lawlers@ukzn.ac.za)

Saul Cobbing (cobbing@ukzn.ac.za)

Jill Hanass-Hancock (JilJill.HanassHancock@mrc.ac.za)

Version: 1 Date: 06 Sep 2019

Author’s response to reviews:

Reviewer #1: Systematic Reviews

METHODOLOGY: Peer reviewed published literature in the last decade (2012-2019) […] will be sourced.

COMMENT: Why seven full years and not 10 years at least starting with 2000? Is there a reason that you may want to explain? Yes there was a scoping review conducted globally and ceased in November 2012.

METHODOLOGY: […] children living with HIV aged 5-10 years will be sourced.

COMMENT: Why children aged 5 to 10 years and not all children less than 17 years of age? Is there a reason that you may want to explain? Do the inclusion criteria the disease severity at diagnosis, the type of treatment, the time period of disease duration?

This paper is a step to developing a school readiness programme for children aged 5-10 years, we have now included the reference to the original study protocol[7]. It is imperative for authors to develop an evidenced based school readiness programme for such contexts with this age group seen as being left behind through vast engagement in the study context.

METHODOLOGY: Arksey and O Malley's [12] scoping review framework will guide this review further consolidated by Levac et al [13] as described in the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) guidelines for scoping reviews [14]. The detail as proposed by Levac et al [13] provides more clarity on the Arksey and O Malley's [12] approach to conducting the scoping review and authors will utilize both frameworks in the current study.

COMMENT: There are many articles about the methodology of scoping reviews. In the Methodology section, the authors should state which specific approach they have chosen and why and if they have opted to customize it.
This has now been addressed. We have reverted to using Arksey and O Malley’s framework after deliberation. Thank you, this made this clearer to us, that is actually the framework applied.

**METHODOLOGY:** The study will incorporate the Participants Concept Context (PCC) model [14].

**COMMENT:** Please check spelling of reference 14 in the reference list.

Corrected thank you, it is now ref 13 as well

**METHODOLOGY:** Exclusion criteria. Articles that do-not report on rehabilitation strategies for children living with HIV aged 5-10 years in sub-Saharan Africa.

**COMMENT:** Redundant, already specified in the inclusion criteria.

removed

**METHODOLOGY:** Exclusion criteria. Evidence from resource rich high-income countries.

**COMMENT:** Please specify "high-income" countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Please explain why some countries of the sub-Saharan Africa are excluded?

This was an oversight, apologies

**METHODOLOGY:** Exclusion criteria. Studies on rehabilitation strategies for adults living with HIV.

**COMMENT:** Redundant, already specified in the inclusion criteria.

Removed thank you

**IDENTIFYING RELEVANT LITERATURE:** The three-step strategy as recommended by JBI will be utilized [14]. Firstly, MEDLINE and CINAHL […] Thereafter the title, abstract and keywords will be read […] Secondly, […] Cochrane library will be utilized to search for evidence using keywords […] The third and final step will involve searching the reference list of the sourced literature

**COMMENT:** The search strategy should be reported with details that allow a quasi-identical replication by others. It means, that the dates, the sources, and the corresponding search terms of various searches including the type of used terms should be reported. I think this is not achieved, the fundamental information on the searches is missing. For example, Cochrane offers the use of text words (letter strings) and the use of terms from a controlled vocabulary. Cochrane offers to execute the search in various search fields such as the record title field, the abstract field, or the keyword field. An electronic database, for example, MEDLINE can be accessed by various providers such as Ovid or NLM. They differ in the syntax used for expressing the search command. The description of the three-step strategy appears awkward, when the first step is searching MEDLINE and the second step is Cochrane library. I see not much sense to just dropping some words into the text without connecting them with operators and assigning them to a specific source.

Thank you kindly for this, we have amended this in consultation with the research team.

We believe it is simple now but makes more sense to all authors. We also used advice from all reviewers to address this gap.

A PubMed pilot search was now added.

**TABLE ON INITIAL SEARCH**

Date of search: 15 May 2019; Search engine used: PubMed; No. of publications: 3431

**COMMENT:** The publication of a protocol should contain and predefine all the information that would later appear identical in word and content in the final review. The review should execute
the approaches detailed in the protocol. Please compare with Cochrane protocols and reviews. Otherwise, the publication of a protocol would not achieve much gain. Therefore, all search strategies should be presented with the required information as suggested above. At the moment, the authors plan to search different sources but report the search strategy of only one source, that is MEDLINE via PubMed. I recommend to complement the information. I also recommend to revise the search strategy reported for searching with PubMed. The results do contain PMID: 25205474, which appears to be potentially relevant. But the results do not contain PMID: 27909379 and PMID: 30332895, which also appear to be potentially relevant.

A PubMed search string has been added to the text. It also explains that this can be reproduced in other databases taking specific nuances into consideration (depending on the database).

Thank you

Reviewer #2: Scoping review on rehabilitation approaches for children living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa

Major concerns
The authors are proposing to scope the literature from 2012 - 2018. In the background, it was mentioned that a scoping review has been conducted up to 2012. Nevertheless, the authors did not explain the reason for their choice of study period. If it is indeed because there is an existing review covering previous years up to 2012, then the authors should indicate that the purpose of this study is to update the existing scoping review. This has now been addressed with the study period explained.

The study is part of an umbrella project that aims to develop a school readiness programme. Another study was conducted prior to December 2012. This has been cleared up now.

Line 173: The authors write "Peer reviewed published literature in the last decade (2012-2019) ..." There are two potential issues with this sentence. (1) The period 2012 - 2019 is not a decade. Secondly, in lines 152 the stipulated period is from 2012-2018, which indicates a discrepancy to the one indicated in line 173.

Corrected, thank you

Exclusion/Inclusion criteria: Are other reviews included or excluded?
Excluded and this is now added to text

The authors indicated that in the second step that there would be some terms that will be used to search the databases. However, in the first step for searching Medline and CINHAL, there are no MeSH terms or otherwise that are indicated to be used for searching.

I have now redressed this and added the pilot strategy in text.

Lines 257-258: It is unclear exactly how the authors plan to do a comparison of the efficacy of the various rehabilitation interventions. First, there will be different interventions (pears and oranges). These comparisons will not be informative.

Corrected, this is accepted. Changed to discuss efficacy and not compare

Minor concerns

Lines 58 - 61: "This scoping review synthesizes existing evidence on rehabilitation intervention strategies used to increase functioning and removing disability-related barriers in children living with HIV and disability in sub-Saharan Africa." The way this sentence is written is suggestive
that the review has already been conducted. I would therefore, propose that the authors should consider writing the sentence as a proposal. For example: This scoping review protocol proposes a synthesize existing evidence…”

Amended, thank you
The sentence on lines 121-123 requires at least a reference. References added
Line 138-139: This sentence sounds confusing especially when connected to the proceeding sentence. Corrected to read better

There is a mixture of British and American English in the manuscript. The authors should consider selecting one for the purposes of consistency.

amended

Reviewer #3

There were a number of errors, just to state few of them: sentences constructions (long sentences usage) just to state this, concepts usage, unnecessary repetitions, language manipulation, clear assignment of tasks to authors, and their details, all those comments do need improvements prior to this SRP publication.
Authors have addressed this and sent to a language editor
Background: Page: 6, Line: 139 to 142 please rephrase this work content part; convey this sentence ideas with few words, and carefully connect this sentence parts using less 'and' connector This is now amended
Methodology: Page: 8 line 172, Please can you rephrase this lines contents 'last decade (2012-2019)', when counting year this sentence is not acceptable.
Corrected thank you
Methodology/Eligibility: Page: 8 line 195, please, can you explain, what do you mean by: "Studies set at home “”?
Methodology/Exclusion criteria Page: 9 Line: 212, please, rephrase this sentence, as there is some form of repetition.
Corrected
There rehabilitation studies in SSA that are home based, this alludes to those contexts
Added to the text highlighted in yellow
Identifying relevant literature: Page: 9 to 10, Lines: 221, please, avoid using: 'Thereafter' to start this sentence.
Try to be precise: 'Repositories of higher education institution', which institution Repositories?

This is now removed
Please find a way to combine ideas convey in line 221 & 231, Page: 10, as there is some form of repetition.
This has been simplified now following further discussion with team and librarians.
Line 237, Page 10, Are you not here carrying a Pilot search instead?
Yes this is now corrected
Thank you
Collating, Summarizing and reporting results Background: page: 11, Lines: 258, please explain the concept: 'efficacy of studies' used here.
Changed to content
Quality appraisal Page: 12, lines 268 to 269, please, it is better to provide reviewers details and tasks at this stage.
Discussion Page: 12 8 lines 286 to 289, please revisit this sentence, as current work is at 'Scoping reviews protocol' stage, not yet a 'Scoping reviews'.

Authors responsible are now added

Amended throughout discussion

Final Comments: Inappropriate systematic approach to the documentation of this SRP, there are few points to be address by authors in the current draft manuscript. An improved version is needed, after visiting BMC Systematic Reviews guidelines of producing a SRP. Finally, it is recommended that this SRP report follows BMC Systematic Reviews submission guidelines, before it can be considered for re-submission of this important topic on children living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa.

SRP BMC Systematic reviews guidelines have been read and adhered too

Reviewer #4
Title better to be modified as "Rehabilitation approaches for children living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa: a protocol for scoping review"

Abstract
Should be formatted/structured (methods should be started with new paragraph). In addition, the abstract is part of (taken from) the background/introduction of the manuscript but I can't find it there. Where did you take the abstract from?

Title adopted, thank you

We have now amended the abstract thank you

Lines 60-61: removing disability-related barriers in children living with HIV and disability … can we remove all disability related barriers in settings where resources are limited? Better to use better term than removing.
This has been corrected to address

Line 64: children aged 5-10 years living with HIV….why only children aged 5-10? What about children less than 5 and above 10 years?
Line 65: MEDLINE instead of PubMed is to be searched. Why not PubMed as it is a data base that indexes more studies than MEDLINE?
Lines 74-75: better to move to the discussion part of the abstract
Key words are too much (better to reduce)
This is part of a bigger umbrella project that aims to develop a school readiness programme for children aged 5-10 years. This has now been added and referenced in the text.
Changed to PubMed now

Moved line 74-75 to discussion

Line 117: needs citation
   Reference added
Line 130-134: If a scoping review on the current topic is done, why you are interested to conduct another review? Can't be a duplicate?
   Its up to November 2012
A lot has been done since in SSA
Not duplicating but providing evidence for a gap over the last 7 years, a lot has happened with the advent of ART. The medication has also changed the face of rehabilitation and disability
Line 152: Why only the period from 2012-2018 is to be included?
   A study was conducted in 2012, will be incorporated in discussion of main paper.
Line 179: Peer reviewed published literature in the last decade (2012-2019) but it was said previously (line 152) as it covers the period from 2012-218. It is inconsistent and needs to make consistent.
   Error, it has been amended
Line 178: aged 5-10 years what about children less than 5 and above 10?
   In this context it is children who attend school or start to attend school. The umbrella project looks at developing a school readiness programme for this age group, which is a critical next step for us disability, rehab researchers
Line 200: Articles published between 2012 and 2019. Is it 2012-2018 or 2019 as previously asked?
   Error, apologies. Corrected
Line 212 (exclusion criteria): Evidence from resource rich high-income countries. Are there any Sub-Saharan African countries with rich high income countries? How could it be exclusion criteria as the study (in the title) is on SSA?
   omitted
Line 216: Is Medline give better citation or PubMed? PubMed gives broader studies and it is reported as PubMed is used instead of Medline in additional file 1 (see it again)
   PubMed pilot search now included
Lines 235-238: may be separately inserted as search strategy/search terms
   We relooked at this section and rewrote it

Line 264: quality of included studies, what is MMAT? Better to include it as additional file or other means. In addition, three reviewers (line 269) will be appraising the quality of studies. Who are these reviewers?
   Added an MMAT as appendix and explained that authors are reviewers (SM, VC and SC)
Lines 279-274: the types of studies to be included are mentioned. What do category one, two, three, four,…types of studies? Is there another way to describe these types of studies like cohort, case control, cross-sectional and the like?
   The categories are explained and will be enhanced by MMAT appendix 1