Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 0 Date: 17 Jun 2019

Reviewer: Frank Peinemann

Reviewer's report:

Systematic Reviews
Protocol Title: Scoping review on rehabilitation approaches for children living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa

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?

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?

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.

METHODOLOGY: The study will incorporate the Participants Concept Context (PCC) model [14].
COMMENT: Please check spelling of reference 14 in the reference list.

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.
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?

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

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

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 predefined 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.
**Level of interest**
Please indicate how interesting you found the manuscript:

An article of importance in its field that should be highlighted to relevant networks

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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Please complete a declaration of competing interests, considering the following questions:

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5. Do you have any other financial competing interests?

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Were you mentored through this peer review?

No