Author’s response to reviews

Title: A systematic review protocol for crime trends facilitated by synthetic biology

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Author’s response to reviews:

Dear Jean Joel R Bigna,

Thank you for your positive letter regarding our paper entitled "A systematic review protocol for crime trends facilitated by synthetic biology" (SYSR-D-19-00289R1).

We would like to thank you and the reviewers for your careful and thorough reading of this manuscript and for the thoughtful comments and constructive suggestions, which have helped us to improve the quality of this manuscript.

We think have addressed all of the three remaining comments, but to make it easy for you to assess the changes made, we detail the reviewer’s comments below (and as a supplementary file, with the edits underlined) along with our responses to them. We have also now placed Table 2 at the end of the manuscript as requested.

We hope that you find our responses satisfactory and that the manuscript is now acceptable for publication.

We thank you for your continued interest in our research.

Yours Sincerely, Mariam Elgabry

Reviewer reports:
Reviewer #1: Thank you for carefully revising the manuscript. The authors have addressed most of my questions/comments. There are a few more suggestions from me, I believe making these changes will make the protocol paper easier to understand for the reader.

We are happy to hear that we have addressed your questions and comments. Thank you for your additional suggestions, we have tried to address all of these and detail how below.

(1) Lines 122-123: Thank you for describing what the Eppi Center software is. For the paper, I think it would be better if the authors described how they will use the software for this systematic review
instead of what the software does. For example: "Eppi Center Review software will be used to upload and analyse extracted references."

Thank you, we agree and have made the correction accordingly.
Page 7, Lines (122-123).
“To review and manage the retrieved studies, Eppi Center Reviewer software will be used. This is an online tool where references will be uploaded and analysed using its coding tools. A manuscript will be written upon completion of the data synthesis and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal.”

(2) Line 136 'hierarchy of evidence': I don't think this phrase has been used correctly here. Please revisit.

Thank you for spotting this! We have now re-phrased.
Page 8, Lines (135-137).
“There are no restrictions on the types of study design eligible for inclusion. The studies will, however, be ranked hierarchically according to the study design, as follows:”

(3) Line 182 'outcome measured': This section should correspond to the what you have stated under aims and objectives of the systematic review. I would suggest that you break this section up into primary and secondary outcomes so that it is consistent.

This is a great suggestion, thank you. We have now split the “Outcomes measured” section into two lists: primary and secondary outcomes. The primary outcomes now correspond to what we have stated under the section “Objectives”.
Page (10), Line (184).
The primary outcomes measured in this review are:
Page (11), Line (195).
The secondary outcomes measured in this review are:

Reviewer #2: Review comments were covered in the responses provided by author, improved after revision.

Thank you!