

Peer Review

Review of: "Protocol: A Systematic Review of Multi-Sectoral Coordination during the COVID-19 Pandemic—Practices, Challenges, and Recommendations for Future Preparedness"

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This is a solid protocol addressing an important topic. Additional suggestions for the authors' consideration are:

For framing analysis: 1) what existing definitions and frameworks covering multisectoral collaboration and 2) multistakeholder collaboration they may wish to use for the analysis, so they are not starting from scratch. There are, for example, the OneHealth multisectoral coordination frameworks in the literature ([Multisectoral Coordination Mechanism Operational Tool](#)), as well as Health in All Policies/multisectoral action/Social determinants of health ([Working together for equity and healthier populations: sustainable multisectoral collaboration based on health in all policies approaches](#)). In that way, the discussion of enablers/barriers, etc., does not reinvent things but builds on existing knowledge. In this context, the definitions of multisectoral – alignment across different areas of public policy interest to public actors, versus multi-stakeholder – across public and private interest, should be applied. In addition, note the concept of coordination versus collaboration, which may hint at the difference between efficiency given existing boundaries of policy actor levers of change, versus integrated co-designed changes.

2) Related to the above point, I suggest a first Review of Systematic Reviews process (umbrella review) for pre-existing systematic reviews covering the subject (question 1).

3) For subgroup sensitivity, I suggest considering the inclusion of country/context categories related to a) levels of poverty; b) the consideration of principles of equity in the social-political environment during COVID-19; c) the treatment of subnational/multilevel and specific local coordination issues.

Success can look different if it is purely efficiency-driven or if considering efficiency-equity and whether all command control occurs at the central level, or adaptations are available for local specificities.

4) In relation to the last question – the application to KZN – the mention of the method you are using to collect data on the local experience should be referred to in the protocol very briefly, and the iterative step of using the general literature to frame the analysis of those KZN analyses, and then evaluating which lessons learned from the broader literature are most relevant to KZN. As there is otherwise no direct way of answering the last research question from the global literature review alone. There is an invisible step there.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.