

Peer Review

# Review of: "Integrated Determinants of Persistent Wild Poliovirus Transmission in Pakistan and Afghanistan: The Roles of Cross-Border Mobility, Hard-to-Reach Populations, and Micro-Transmission Hotspots, 2010-2025"

Thi Nguyen Hoa-Tran<sup>1</sup>

1. National Institute Of Hygiene And Epidemiology, Hanoi, Vietnam

This manuscript addresses an important and timely global health issue and provides a broad synthesis of the determinants sustaining WPV1 transmission in the last endemic regions. The overall structure is appropriate for a scoping review, and the thematic organization is clear. However, the manuscript is primarily descriptive, focusing on summarizing existing evidence rather than generating new insights, resulting in limited analytical depth and modest novelty.

The major strengths of the manuscript include:

- (1) A highly relevant topic with strong public health importance;
- (2) A clear and logical structure consistent with a scoping review;
- (3) Integration of multiple evidence sources, including grey literature;
- (4) Effective thematic organization (cross-border transmission, immunity gaps, micro-transmission hotspots, and operational constraints);
- (5) Useful and policy-relevant implications.

In contrast, several weaknesses should be addressed:

- **Abstract:** Although the abstract broadly follows a structured format, the research objective is not explicitly stated, and the opening background sentence appears incomplete. Clarifying the objective and improving the flow between sections would enhance clarity.

- **Introduction:** The research question and specific objectives are not explicitly defined.
- **Methods:** Methodological transparency is limited, particularly regarding the full search strategy, data extraction procedures, and the absence of any assessment of study quality.
- **Results:** The synthesis is predominantly descriptive, with limited critical analysis or comparison across studies.
- **Discussion:** While the findings are clearly summarized, the discussion largely reiterates existing knowledge and lacks critical appraisal. There is limited exploration of inconsistencies or uncertainty in the evidence. The section would benefit from a more integrative or conceptual framework.
- **Conclusion:** The conclusion is clear but lacks a strong novel or forward-looking contribution.

**Minor issues include:**

- Minor typographical and formatting errors;
- Some sentences are overly long and repetitive;
- Table titles and descriptions could be more precise;
- Figures should be clearly labeled and consistently referenced in the text.

In summary, this manuscript provides a useful and policy-relevant synthesis of factors sustaining WPV1 transmission in the last endemic regions. It is suitable for a platform such as Qeios, where timely and accessible evidence synthesis is valuable.

However, to improve its scientific rigor and overall impact, the manuscript requires **moderate revision**, particularly in clarifying the research objectives, enhancing methodological transparency, strengthening analytical depth and critical synthesis, and reducing redundancy.

## **Declarations**

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.