

Peer Review

Review of: "Mental Health Challenges among Children and Adolescents Associated with HIV Status Disclosure: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocol"

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This protocol presents a well-structured and methodologically robust framework for evaluating mental health challenges following HIV status disclosure among children and adolescents, addressing a clinically and socially significant global health issue. The protocol demonstrates strong methodological transparency, appropriate use of systematic review standards such as PRISMA-P 2015, and rigorous bias assessment strategies, which enhance its reproducibility and reliability. The planned subgroup and sensitivity analyses are commendable and likely to improve the interpretation of heterogeneity across settings. However, the protocol could be strengthened by clarifying strategies for managing variability in mental health measurement tools across studies and by providing more detail on how cultural and contextual disclosure practices may influence outcome interpretation. Additionally, aligning anticipated disclosure guidance and age thresholds with international pediatric HIV recommendations, such as those from the World Health Organization, and pre-specifying approaches for handling mixed-method or longitudinal data could further improve the scientific rigor and translational relevance of the study.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.