

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

Dear Editor/Author(s),

Thank you for inviting me to review the manuscript entitled "Mental Health Challenges Among Children and Adolescents Associated With HIV Status Disclosure: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocol" submitted to Qeios.

The abstract provides a clear overview of the background, objectives, methods, and expected results of the study. It effectively conveys the importance of understanding children and adolescents' mental health issues following disclosure of HIV status. The objectives are clearly defined and focus on conducting a systematic review and meta-analysis to determine the prevalence of mental health problems and associated factors in this population. The Methods section describes a rigorous approach that includes systematic searches, data extraction, statistical analysis, and bias assessment. The expected results are clearly stated, and the importance of the study results for informing clinical practice and health policy is highlighted. Overall, the summary effectively forms the basis for the research study.

The study aims to fill an important gap in the literature by examining mental health problems among children and adolescents following HIV status disclosure. The systematic review and meta-analysis approach is suitable for synthesizing existing evidence on the prevalence and factors associated with mental health problems in this population. The inclusion of multiple databases and a broad search period increases the likelihood of capturing relevant studies. The use of standardized data extraction forms and statistical techniques, such as the random effects model, adds even more power to the study results. The results of the study are expected to have important implications for clinical practice and health policy, highlighting the need for tailored interventions and policy initiatives to address the mental health problems of children and adolescents living with HIV.

While the study mentions that both observational and interventional studies will be included, it would be helpful to indicate the specific types of studies (e.g., cohort studies, cross-sectional studies, randomized controlled trials) and any eligibility criteria related to the study design. The study mentions that the risk of bias will be assessed using appropriate tools. However, it would be beneficial to indicate which instruments are used and how biases are dealt with in the analysis and interpretation of the results. The study mentions the use of the I<sup>2</sup> test and the random effects model. Additional details on how to handle statistical heterogeneity and calculate effect sizes would improve transparency and reproducibility. It would be helpful to acknowledge potential limitations of the study in advance, such as: B. Publication bias, heterogeneity of

study populations, or variability in measurement tools for mental health outcomes.

Based on the merit of the manuscript, I recommend proceeding with full review of the manuscript. The study addresses an important research question and uses a rigorous methodology to summarize existing evidence on mental health problems in children and adolescents living with HIV. Addressing the areas for improvement highlighted above will strengthen the manuscript and ensure clarity and transparency in reporting. Overall, the study has the potential to make a valuable contribution to paediatric HIV care and mental health.

In essence, the study makes a notable contribution to the body of knowledge, although it requires minor revisions.

I thank the editor again for the invitation.

With best regards,

Reviewer