Review of: "Treading the Thin Line Between Health Ethics and Patient Care in the Application of Telemedicine: The Case of Sound Ethical Guidelines in Telemedicine in Sub-Saharan Africa"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Major Comments:

Comprehensiveness of Literature Review: The manuscript does a commendable job highlighting the importance of telemedicine in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and the ethical considerations that come with its application. However, it could benefit from a more comprehensive literature review, particularly including recent studies that have evaluated the effectiveness of telemedicine interventions in SSA. This would help in understanding the current landscape and identifying gaps that your study aims to address.

Methodological Details: The paper discusses the ethical challenges and the need for sound governance in telemedicine. However, it lacks detailed methodological approaches that could be employed to develop and implement ethical guidelines. Adding a section that outlines potential methodologies, such as Delphi studies, expert panels, or stakeholder consultations, could enrich the manuscript by providing a clear roadmap for addressing the identified ethical issues.

Analysis of Ethical Frameworks: While the manuscript mentions the need for sound ethical governance, it could be enhanced by a deeper analysis of existing ethical frameworks in healthcare and how they could be adapted or expanded to encompass telemedicine-specific issues in SSA. Discussing specific principles or guidelines that have been successful in other regions could offer valuable insights for developing robust ethical frameworks in SSA.

Case Studies or Examples: Incorporating case studies or real-world examples of telemedicine applications in SSA, where ethical guidelines have either succeeded or failed, could provide practical insights into the complexities of implementing these guidelines. This addition would not only illustrate the real-world implications of the theoretical discussion but also highlight best practices and lessons learned.

Minor Comments:

Clarification of Terminology: Ensure that all technical terms and acronyms (e.g., TM for telemedicine) are clearly defined upon first use to make the manuscript accessible to readers who may not be familiar with them.

Reference Updates: Some references seem outdated or not directly relevant to the SSA context. Updating these references to include more recent studies conducted in SSA could strengthen the manuscript's relevance and authority.

Discussion on Digital Literacy: The manuscript briefly mentions digital literacy as a barrier to telemedicine adoption. Expanding on this point by discussing potential strategies for improving digital literacy in SSA could enhance the manuscript's comprehensiveness.

Ethical Considerations in Data Security: While the manuscript touches on data security, providing a more detailed discussion of the ethical considerations surrounding data protection, privacy, and consent in the digital age, specifically in the context of SSA, would be beneficial.