

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.

I have had the opportunity to review the study titled "Mental Health Challenges Among Children and Adolescents Associated With HIV Status Disclosure: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocol". I would like to offer the authors recommendations to improve the manuscript as it currently stands.

1. Expand the introduction to more clearly articulate the global impact of HIV on children and adolescents, highlighting why understanding the mental health challenges associated with HIV status disclosure is crucial. Incorporate statistics to provide context on the prevalence of the problem.
 2. Describe the search strategy in more detail. Include specific search strings or combinations of keywords that will be used across different databases to ensure replicability of the review process.
 3. Clearly outline the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Specify the types of study designs that will be included in the review and justify the reasons for excluding others (e.g., qualitative studies).
- Improve the description of data extraction processes. Specify which data elements will be extracted and how discrepancies between extractors will be resolved, beyond just involving a third person.
4. Discuss the methods for assessing the quality of included studies more thoroughly. Explain how each tool (e.g., NIH quality assessment tool and Cochrane Collaboration tool) will be applied to different study designs.
 5. Include plans for a sensitivity analysis to determine how robust the findings are to changes in the study inclusion criteria or statistical methods.
 6. Provide definitions or operational measures for mental health challenges like depression, anxiety, and suicidality as used in the studies to be reviewed. This will help in understanding the comparability of the findings across different studies.
 7. Discuss the expected impact of the findings on clinical practice and policy-making in more detail. Highlight how this review could influence future guidelines or interventions to support children and adolescents who are disclosing their HIV status.

8. Detail specific strategies for disseminating the research findings to key stakeholders, including healthcare providers, policymakers, and communities affected by HIV. Discuss the potential for integration into existing programs and policies.
9. Consider the addition of patient advocacy groups and educational institutions as target audiences for dissemination of results.
10. Although ethical approval may not be applicable, discuss the ethical considerations in handling sensitive data and reporting on vulnerable populations such as children and adolescents with HIV.
11. Ensure that the manuscript is free from jargon, and that complex terminology is well-explained to make the protocol accessible to readers not specialized in the field.