

Review of: "The Plight of Rare Diseases in Southern Africa: Health and Social Services Policy Recommendations"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I had the privilege of reviewing this work. This an excellent piece of work. The language used is scientific, and the literature cited is current and relevant. However, the authors should make the suggested changes to improve the appearance of this work.

Section	Subsection	Comment
Abstract	Paragraph 2, line 1	Write "SADC" in full since you are using it here for the very first time.
Abstract	Paragraph 1, line 3	"The majority of rare diseases are hereditary and affect children." Is there a scientific reason why children are most affected? If so, include it.
Abstract	Paragraph 1, line 3-4	"RDs are understudied and are difficult to diagnose, manage, and treat." Is this the case to all RDs or specific RDs? Provide literature. Could this be propelled by the attention given to the diagnosis, management and treatment of these diseases? What can be done to improve the diagnosis, management and treatment of these RDs?
Abstract	Paragraph 2, line 3-6	Under the recommendations section add a point on timely and accurate diagnosis, management and treatment of these RDs.
Background		Mention RDs that are common in SSA and their prevalence. You can also indicate trends over the years, this is important as it will provide a clear road map on the disease burden and the current situation.
Situational analysis of rare diseases in the SADC region	Paragraph 1, line 3-7	You have provided a list of rare diseases and I haven't seen sickle cell anemia which is common in SSA and is affecting children. Is there a clear reason why you omitted it?
Situational analysis of rare diseases in the SADC region	Paragraph 2, line 1-2	"On the other hand, there are no clear guidelines on the treatment and management of rare diseases, leaving the burden on patients and their families." Is this applicable to all the rare diseases? What about sickle cell anemia?
Situational analysis of rare diseases in the SADC region	Paragraph 6	This paragraph is too small, please consider merging it.
Situational analysis of rare diseases in the SADC region		SSA has so many countries, so far you have only mentioned South Africa, Tanzania, Zanzibar... what is the progress of the other countries not mentioned in this paper?
Policy recommendations for the diagnosis, treatment, and research of rare diseases in the SADC region	Paragraph 1	How can these policy frameworks be achieved? What are the possible hindrances? How can they be mitigated?
List of abbreviations		Some words are missing here, for example RDs, H3Africa, EU and ICORD.

