

## Peer Review Report

# Review Report on Skill-mix, health promotion, prevention, advanced practice, task-shifting, ambulatory care, innovation

Review, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Reviewer 2

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### EVALUATION

#### **Q 1** Please summarize the main theme of the review.

This study reports on an overview of review of skill-change interventions in the context of health promotion and prevention, i.e. interventions in which “the roles, tasks or skills of individual professions or teams” were changed.

#### **Q 2** Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

Strengths of the article include the importance of the topic and the breadth and complexity of the evidence reviewed. Limitations of the manuscript in its current form (but which may still be addressed by the authors) mostly concern the overall framing (including the introduction) and the way the study conduct is reported and the results are presented, which does not always allows for a meaningful interpretation of the findings.

#### **Q 3** Please provide your detailed review report to the authors, structured in major and minor comments.

This is an interesting study on an important topic, and I congratulate the authors to their impressive work. There are, however, a number of issues which should be clarified or improved. Please note that it is in the nature of peer review that comments focus on aspects of a manuscript that can still be improved, and not on its strengths – this can create the wrong impression of an overwhelmingly critical assessment. I would therefore like to emphasize that this study has many important strengths, including the breadth and complexity of the evidence reviewed, and the high policy relevance of the review’s topic.

Major comments:

Use of a reporting guideline: To make sure that your manuscript includes all relevant information, please use and refer to an appropriate reporting guideline. For reviews of reviews of health care interventions, the most comprehensive and up-to-date reporting guideline is (as far as I know), the PRIOR guideline (Preferred Reporting Items for Overviews of Reviews), see <https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/reporting-guideline-for-overviews-of-reviews-of-healthcare-interventions-development-of-the-prior-statement/>. The PRISMA guideline and, PRISMA extension for abstracts (<https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/prisma-abstracts/>), and the Synthesis Without Meta-analysis (SWiM) in systematic reviews reporting guideline may also be of relevance (<https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.l6890>).

Please include the respective checklist(s) in the supplementary appendix, and please mention in the manuscript that you followed these guidelines. Please report all the items specified in the guideline; if there are items on which you can’t report please explain why this is the case (you may do this as footnotes to the checklist in the supplementary appendix, or in the main manuscript).

Scope of the review: I was left confused which sectors were included in your review. Was it “primary care and public health” (as mentioned in the first sentence of the abstract), or “health promotion, prevention” (second sentence of the abstract) “ambulatory care” (methods section, line 69–70), or even any “other settings (e.g. schools)” (methods section, line 85–86). This is very confusing and needs to be clarified. (After reading the

whole manuscript I understood that you seem to have focused on interventions relevant to health promotion and prevention delivered in any setting except hospitals. If this is correct (of which I'm not sure), then this needs to be clearly stated upfront in the title, the abstract and throughout the manuscript.

Presentation of the results: I found the long, narrative summary of the results of the included studies a bit tiring. Please check if a table or a graphical presentation of results would help readers to get a quick overview on the results, and their overall direction. A number of approaches for graphical and tabular syntheses of diverse bodies of evidence have been developed, which can be used when meta-analysis is not feasible – this includes the effect direction plot (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3688329/>) and the harvest plot (<https://bmcmmedresmethodol.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2288-8-8>). The Synthesis Without Meta-analysis (SWiM) in systematic reviews reporting guideline may also be helpful (<https://www.bmj.com/content/368/bmj.l6890>).

Minor comments:

Line 10–12 (“Expanded roles performing outreach (e.g. home visits) had positive effects on access and health outcomes”). Was this really always the case? If not, you may want to use a wording like “had mostly positive effects” or “had positive effects in some contexts”. This also applies to the remaining parts of the Findings section of the abstract, where you may want to be a bit more balanced.

Line 29–31 (“Many of these actions require changes to the roles and skill-mix of the health workforce, which in turn, can also be a driver for the integration of public health and primary care services.”): Please provide an explanation, and evidence and references for this statement. It can not be simply assumed that this is necessarily the case.

Line 25–38: This part of the introduction is a bit lengthy, very broad, and not clearly focused on the core topic of the actual study. Please consider shortening it, with a clearer focus on skill-mix changes.

Line 31–32 (“Skill-mix is defined as changes to the roles, tasks or skills of individual professions or teams (6, 7).”): Shouldn't this sentence read “Skill mix changes are defined as...”? Please double-check. Moreover, as this term is at the very core of your study, I would suggest that you spend a few more sentences on explaining it, e.g. by providing some examples.

Line 54–62: This paragraph left me somewhat confused with regard to relationship between the study on which the present paper is based (references 24 and 25) and the present paper itself. Reference 24 seems to be a report by the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies published online and as a book, and reference 25 seems to be a chapter within this book. Is the present paper a secondary publication of results that have already been reported in this report? Or in which other way is it “based on” this report? Please clarify.

Line 65–67: Please specify at which stage of the review process your protocol was registered, and if all differences between protocol and review have been explained (you may do so in a separate section within the methods section, or in the supplementary appendix).

Methods section: Please specify clearly for each step of the review process if it was done by one review author or by two authors working independently (i.e. in duplicate), and indicate which authors were involved in which step by providing their initials.

Results section: In several cases, I find the description of the interventions examined in the included reviews not sufficiently detailed. E.g., what does “pharmacists with expanded roles in reducing unintended pregnancy” actually mean, or “pharmacists with greater autonomy”? What did these pharmacists actually do different from before / in which way was their role or their autonomy expanded? And what kind of colorectal cancer screening is discussed in line 221–229? Colorectal cancer screening by colonoscopy, or by some other means? This is crucial information, which needs to be provided. Similar comments apply to most of the other interventions / skill-mix changes discussed in the results section.

Results section: Whenever possible, try to present also quantitative data, instead of generic statements like “were better with” or “improved with”. This applies, for example, to the statement “A meta analysis found that dietary advice and related services provided by dieticians were better than physicians in lowering blood cholesterol in the short to medium term”, but also many others in the results section.

Results section: Please always specify what the comparison was – without this, many of the results are not particularly meaningful (this applies, for example, to this sentence, but also many others “The reviews on nurse-delivered interventions found statistically improved outcome parameters on weight reduction or control (59), on reduced BMI in 65% of studies (60) and on BMI or other weight-related measures in 63% of the studies (61).”

**PLEASE COMMENT**

**Q 4** Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?

Yes

**Q 5** Does this manuscript refer only to published data? (unpublished data is not allowed for Reviews)

Yes.

**Q 6** Does the manuscript cover the issue in an objective and analytical manner

Yes.

**Q 7** Was a review on the issue published in the past 12 months?

Yes.

**Q 8** Does the review have international or global implications?

Yes

**Q 9** Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

Yes

**Q 10** Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

**Q 11** Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes

**Q 12** Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Yes.

#### QUALITY ASSESSMENT

<b>Q 13</b>	Quality of generalization and summary	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Q 14</b>	Significance to the field	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Q 15</b>	Interest to a general audience	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Q 16</b>	Quality of the writing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### REVISION LEVEL

**Q 17** Please take a decision based on your comments:

Major revisions.