

## Peer Review Report

# Review Report on How mHealth can contribute to improving the continuum of care: A scoping review approach to the case of human immunodeficiency virus in sub-Saharan Africa.

Review, Public Health Rev

Reviewer: Rita Dias

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### EVALUATION

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

The main theme of this review is the role of mHealth in improving both HIV and AIDS care and treatment in Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, it discusses the impact of mHealth on the patient-provider relationship as well as on patient adherence to treatment and retention in care.

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

This revision's main limitations are 1. The existent connection among digital health, mHealth, HIV, AIDS, care and treatment, the relationship between patient and healthcare professional are not sufficiently discussed in the introduction section; 2. there is a need to organize better the text and the main ideas; 3. there is a lack of explanation on how the studies were selected and data extracted, summarized, and analyzed. There is only a brief note that the studies were screened by the revisions first author, despite the guidelines recommending two revisors; There are, however, some important strengths. 1. The mHealth is a very actual theme and it is important to study and stress the importance of "new" tools in tackling HIV/AIDS; 2. This review stresses the importance of the economic dimension in study protocols; 3. The review summarizes important guidelines for the implementation of science; 4. It focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa specificities, looking to vulnerable settings that add to those difficulties the digital divide and, sometimes, lack of connectivity, trying to transform this into an opportunity and to highlight the need to improve those to improve health (response); 5. The review draws very relevant conclusions.

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

The general objective is not well formulated. There is, however, a good rapport between the study and the more specific objectives. It should be considered to reformulate the main objective to have a better connection between the main objective, the specific objectives, and all the revision text-work. In doing so, it will erase the limitation concerning both the text and ideas organization.

Also, the conclusion stated in the abstract does not provide a proper answer to the main objective, despite pointing out important advice towards the way mHealth should be designed and implemented. Nevertheless, there is not a word about how it will accelerate/contribute to the HIV 2025 objectives concretization.

The way the objective is formulated is not clear. The HIV 2025 objectives are to some extent quantitative. Therefore, this type of study does not allow to easily answer in a quantitative manner. The results show that the mHealth can play an important role in supporting HIV patients and even to improve health, but it is not quantified in this study.

Regarding the scoping review methodology and although some justification about the review approach chosen, there is a need to develop that justification a bit longer. For instance, nothing is said about finding relevant research gaps, which is one of the most important scoping reviews proposes. There are review objectives that are stated, but in performing a scoping review, there are also some methodological objectives that follow.

Also, the authors present the inclusion and exclusion criteria but do not justify the choice.

There is also important to substitute the expression "research question" for "review question". It is a more suitable expression since this work is a literature review.

It would be important to consider the review question. Is it measurable and is it possible to provide an answer to that question through a scoping review? Reflect about it and reformulate as needed, please.

Finally, consider again your conclusions and the need of reformulating the main objective. Despite very important, the conclusions do not provide an answer toward the presented main objective.

**PLEASE COMMENT**

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

Yes, it does.

**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?

No.

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

This review provides international implications since it is about Sub-Saharan Africa. Besides the context-specificities of these African settings, there can be important implications for other countries with similar needs. Also, in this global world, through travelling, displacement, and migration, good practices in HIV/AIDS care and treatment could remain even when people move away from these countries.

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

The title is appropriate, concise, and attractive. However, I recommend reformulating it, in order not to have two sentences on int. For instance, it could be something like this:  
"How mHealth can contribute to improving the continuum of care: A Scoping Review approach to the case of HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa."

**Q 10** Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes, they are.

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

Yes, it is. Nevertheless, it is recommended to write in passive voice and use the third person, avoiding sentences like "we believe" or "we opted".

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

Yes.

#### QUALITY ASSESSMENT

**Q 13** ➤ Quality of generalization and summary



**Q 14** ➤ Significance to the field



**Q 15** ➤ Interest to a general audience



**Q 16** ➤ Quality of the writing



#### REVISION LEVEL

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

Major revisions.