

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

Title (Provisional)

The role of digital technology in epidemic control: A scoping review on COVID-19 and Ebola

Authors

Abebe, Gossa Fetene; Alie, Melsew Setegn; Yosef, Tewodros; Asmelash, Daniel; Dessalegn, Dorka; Adugna, Amanuel; Girma, Desalegn

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

Reviewer	1
Name	Akinwusi, Olukunle
Affiliation	FIND
Date	18-Nov-2024
COI	None

The paper is very well written. It was mentioned a few times that, compared to other sectors, public health has been slower in adopting digital innovations. Authors should support the aforementioned statement either by citing the statement or adding the comparative analysis done to reach such a conclusion.

Reviewer	2
Name	Nobre, Vandack
Affiliation	Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Internal medicine
Department	
Date	20-Nov-2024
COI	None

This is a well-written and interesting manuscript that aims to review the role of digital technology in epidemic control, focusing on Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks. I have a few comments for the authors:

- The results in the Abstract section do not mention Ebola and COVID-19. Please revise.

- The Introduction section could be shortened.
- In my opinion, the authors do not need to explain the meaning of a scoping review as they did in the Methods section: "The scoping review is important for mapping emerging topics and identifying gaps. It has six steps: stating the research question, searching relevant studies, selecting studies, charting data, summarizing and reporting results, and consultation (optional) [21]."
- How did the authors select the search terms? For example, the terms "importance," "impact," and "role of digital technology" were used to search for articles in the data sources. Although many articles were identified, can it be stated that these terms were adequate? Please comment.
- It is unclear whether all articles had to include either Ebola or COVID-19 in their content. It would be helpful to know how many of the included papers addressed each of these conditions.
- The English language requires some improvement.

VERSION 1 - AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer: 1

Mr. Olukunle Akinwusi, FIND

Comments to the Author:

Reviewer comment 1: The paper is very well written. It was mentioned a few times that, compared to other sectors, public health has been slower in adopting digital innovations. Authors should support the aforementioned statement either by citing the statement or adding the comparative analysis done to reach such a conclusion.

Authors response: Thanks very much, dear reviewer, for your constructive comment. We, the authors, assure you that the aforementioned statement has been supported with reference (*See page 13 line 22*).

Reviewer: 2

Prof. Vandack Nobre, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

Comments to the Author:

This is a well-written and interesting manuscript that aims to review the role of digital technology in epidemic control, focusing on Ebola and COVID-19 outbreaks. I have a few comments for the authors:

Reviewer comment 1: The results in the Abstract section do not mention Ebola and COVID-19. Please revise.

Authors response: Thanks very much, dear reviewer, for your constructive comment. We, the authors, appreciate your comment and correction has been as commented (*See page 2 lines 13-14*).

Reviewer comment 2: The Introduction section could be shortened.

Authors response: Thanks very much dear reviewer for your constructive comment. We, the authors, appreciate your comment and the introduction section has been shortened as commented (*See the 'introduction' on pages 4-5*).

Reviewer comment 3: In my opinion, the authors do not need to explain the meaning of a scoping review as they did in the Methods section: "The scoping review is important for mapping emerging topics and identifying gaps. It has six steps: stating the research question, searching relevant studies, selecting studies, charting data, summarizing and reporting results, and consultation (optional) [21]."

Authors response: Thank you very much, dear reviewer, for your suggestion. We, the authors, agree with your recommendation; however, this statement was included based on the advice of another reviewer. If it is deemed inappropriate, we are happy to amend it as directed.

Reviewer comment 3: How did the authors select the search terms? For example, the terms "importance," "impact," and "role of digital technology" were used to search for articles in the data sources. Although many articles were identified, can it be stated that these terms were adequate? Please comment.

Authors response: Thank you very much, dear reviewer, for your constructive suggestions and comments. We assure you that we selected the search terms based on their importance to ensure the search yielded relevant literature, as indicated in Table 2.

Reviewer comment 4: It is unclear whether all articles had to include either Ebola or COVID-19 in their content. It would be helpful to know how many of the included papers addressed each of these conditions.

Authors response: Thanks very much dear reviewer for your constructive comment. We, the authors, assure you that we included articles that report on at least Ebola or COVID-19 in their content. As indicated in Table 3, 11 articles are related to Ebola, and 53 articles are related to COVID-19.

Reviewer comment 5: The English language requires some improvement.

Authors response: Thank you very much, dear reviewer, for your constructive comment. We appreciate your feedback, and the English language has been edited accordingly.