

### Review Form 3

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| Journal Name:            | <a href="#">Journal of Complementary and Alternative Medical Research</a>                                      |
| Manuscript Number:       | Ms_JOCAMR_126668   |
| Title of the Manuscript: | Scoping review of the literature on the psychosocial impacts Ebola virus epidemic on West Africans in Victoria |
| Type of the Article      | Scoping review   |

#### General guidelines for the Peer Review process:

This journal's peer review policy states that **NO** manuscript should be rejected only on the basis of '**lack of Novelty**', provided the manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound. To know the complete guidelines for the Peer Review process, reviewers are requested to visit this link:

<https://r1.reviewerhub.org/general-editorial-policy/>

#### Important Policies Regarding Peer Review

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Benefits for Reviewers: <https://r1.reviewerhub.org/benefits-for-reviewers>

#### PART 1: Review Comments

| Compulsory REVISION comments  | Reviewer's comment   | Author's Feedback <i>(Please correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here)</i> |
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| <b>Please write a few sentences regarding the importance of this manuscript for the scientific community. Why do you like (or dislike) this manuscript? A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.</b> | This manuscript provides important insights into the long-term psychosocial impacts of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic, particularly on West African survivors, a topic that has been relatively underexplored compared to other health crises. It addresses a significant gap in understanding the mental health challenges faced by epidemic survivors post-outbreak by analysing factors such as trauma, social support, and coping mechanisms. Additionally, it provides actionable steps, such as incorporating psychosocial support and health education into epidemic responses, to enhance community resilience and support systems following epidemics. Overall, the manuscript's emphasis on translating past epidemic experiences into guidance for future health crises makes it a meaningful contribution to public and mental health.   |   |
| <b>Is the title of the article suitable? (If not please suggest an alternative title)</b>   | The title, " <i>Scoping Review of the Literature on the Psychosocial Impacts of the Ebola Virus Epidemic on West Africans in Victoria</i> ," could be more precise. The phrase " <i>on West Africans in Victoria</i> " may be confusing, as it suggests a focus on West African populations specifically in Victoria, Australia, rather than on West Africans living in West Africa who were impacted by the epidemic. Additionally, the manuscript did not mention anything about Victoria except in the title.<br><br>A clearer alternative could be: " <i>Scoping Review of the Psychosocial Impacts of the Ebola Virus Epidemic on West African Populations</i> ." Or, if the study includes a focus on implications for populations in Victoria, it could be: " <i>Scoping Review of the Psychosocial Impacts of the Ebola Virus Epidemic on West Africans: Implications for Populations in Victoria</i> ". |   |

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| <p><b>Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? Do you suggest the addition (or deletion) of some points in this section? Please write your suggestions here.</b></p>   | <p>The abstract provides a basic overview of the study but could benefit from greater clarity and additional detail to enhance its comprehensiveness. Here are some suggested improvements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Clarify the Purpose:</b> The abstract introduces the topic but does not clearly state the specific purpose or research questions guiding the review. Including a sentence outlining the objectives would strengthen the focus.</li> <li><b>Methods:</b> While the methods mention critical appraisal and use of the McMaster tool, more detail could be added, such as the databases searched and key criteria for article inclusion, to help readers understand the scope and rigor of the review.</li> <li><b>Results Summary:</b> The results could be elaborated to include more specifics about the main findings, especially regarding the prevalence of trauma, types of coping strategies, and social support challenges reported. A brief mention of key quantitative outcomes would also provide a clearer picture.</li> <li><b>Conclusion:</b> The conclusion would be stronger if it explicitly stated the implications of the findings, such as the need for enhanced psychosocial support in healthcare responses to future epidemics. A call for further research in specific areas would also be valuable.</li> </ol> <p><b>Suggested Revised Abstract:</b> The abstract could be revised to: <i>"This scoping review examines the psychosocial impacts of the 2014-16 Ebola virus disease (EVD) epidemic on West African populations, focusing on trauma, social support, and coping mechanisms. Using systematic database searches across multiple databases and appraisals with the McMaster tool, 24 studies were included. The findings indicate that EVD survivors experienced significant psychosocial distress, with limited access to government support and mixed coping strategies. This review highlights critical gaps in mental health resources for epidemic survivors and calls for further research to inform support strategies in future health crises."</i></p> <p>These adjustments would make the abstract more informative and aligned with the manuscript's key points.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Are subsections and structure of the manuscript appropriate?</b></p>  | <p>The subsections and structure of the manuscript are generally appropriate and follow a logical flow that helps readers understand the study's background, objectives, methodology, results, and implications. However, some improvements in organization and clarity could enhance readability and coherence. Here are specific observations and suggestions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Introduction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The background is thorough, but a separate subsection for Objective of the Study could clarify the research questions and purpose early on. This would guide readers more effectively as they move through the manuscript.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Materials and Methods:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This section is well-organized, outlining the study design, data collection, and data analysis methods. It may benefit from a subsection explicitly for Data Sources and Search Strategy to clearly specify the databases and search terms used.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Results:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Summary Characteristics of the Literature and Critical Review for Specific Objectives sections are helpful, but adding subsection titles for each research question addressed (e.g., "Social Support," "Coping Strategies") could make it easier to follow the discussion on each theme.</li> <li>Consider adding summary tables or figures (like PRISMA flow charts) that visually organize findings for quick reference.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Discussion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The discussion covers the findings well, but structuring it around the original research questions or objectives would improve flow and ensure alignment with the stated goals of the review.</li> <li>Adding a Limitations subsection in the discussion would provide a balanced view of the study's scope and acknowledge any limitations in methodology or data.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Conclusion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The conclusion is appropriate, but a Future Directions or Implications subsection could be added to emphasize the practical applications of the findings and areas for future research.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Overall, the manuscript is well-structured, but a few additional subsections and some reorganization would enhance its readability and alignment with academic standards.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Please write a few sentences regarding the scientific correctness of this manuscript. Why do you think that this manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound? A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.</b></p> | <p>This manuscript is scientifically robust and technically sound due to its systematic approach in reviewing the psychosocial impacts of the Ebola virus epidemic on West African populations. By following the PRISMA framework and using established tools like the McMaster appraisal tool, the study ensures a rigorous assessment of study quality and relevance. Additionally, the choice of multiple well-regarded databases (e.g., CINAHL, MEDLINE, PsycINFO) strengthens the comprehensiveness of the literature search, reducing selection bias and enhancing the reliability of findings. The study's use of quantitative data summaries and methodical critical appraisal provides a clear and evidence-based foundation for understanding the impacts of the epidemic, making it a valuable and technically sound contribution to public health literature.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestions of additional references, please mention them in the review form.</b></p>   | <p>The references in this manuscript are generally sufficient and include a range of relevant studies that provide historical and contextual background on the Ebola virus epidemic and its psychosocial impacts. The majority of references are pertinent to the topic and include foundational studies as well as recent sources, especially from the last decade. However, since the manuscript draws comparisons with COVID-19, it might benefit from a few more recent references on mental health impacts specific to COVID-19 survivors, which would strengthen its relevance and enhance the discussion on</p>   |  |

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|   | <p>epidemic-related psychosocial effects.</p> <p><b>Suggested References:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Esterwood, E., &amp; Saeed, S. A. (2020). <i>Past epidemics, natural disasters, COVID-19, and mental health: Learning from history as we deal with the present and prepare for the future</i>. <i>Psychiatric Quarterly</i>, 91(4), 1121-1133.</li> <li>2. Vindegaard, N., &amp; Benros, M. E. (2020). <i>COVID-19 pandemic and mental health consequences: Systematic review of the current evidence</i>. <i>Brain, Behavior, and Immunity</i>, 89, 531-542.</li> <li>3. Pfefferbaum, B., &amp; North, C. S. (2020). <i>Mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic</i>. <i>New England Journal of Medicine</i>, 383(6), 510-512.</li> </ol> <p>Adding these references would provide a stronger basis for the discussion of parallels between the psychosocial impacts of the Ebola and COVID-19 epidemics.</p>   |  |
| <p><u>Minor</u> REVISION comments</p> <p><b>Is the language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications?</b></p> | <p>The language quality of the article is generally suitable for scholarly communication, but minor revisions would improve readability and clarity. There are occasional grammatical errors, awkward phrasing, and inconsistencies that could be addressed to enhance flow. For example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grammar and Clarity: Some sentences are overly complex or have grammatical errors that may hinder understanding. Simplifying sentence structures and ensuring subject-verb agreement would improve readability.</li> <li>2. Consistency: Terms like “EVD epidemic” and “Ebola virus disease” should be used consistently throughout the manuscript to avoid confusion.</li> <li>3. Formal Tone: A few informal phrases could be refined to maintain a formal, academic tone. For example, replacing “it could be argued that” with “it is suggested that” or “it appears” would be more precise.</li> <li>4. Punctuation and Typos: Minor punctuation errors, such as missing commas or inconsistent use of hyphens (e.g., “psychosocial-health” versus “psychosocial health”), should be corrected.</li> </ol> <p>Overall, while the article is well-written, these small adjustments would improve its quality and ensure it meets the standards for scholarly communication.</p>   |  |
| <p><u>Optional/General</u> comments</p>   | <p>The manuscript addresses an important and underexplored area by examining the long-term psychosocial impacts of the Ebola virus epidemic on West African populations. Its strengths include a well-defined methodology, a systematic approach to reviewing the literature, and clear implications for future healthcare and mental health practices.</p> <p>To further enhance its impact, the authors might consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expanding on comparisons between Ebola and other recent health crises, like COVID-19, to contextualize findings for broader applications.</li> <li>• Providing additional tables or figures summarizing key findings to aid visual comprehension.</li> <li>• Emphasizing practical recommendations for integrating findings into mental health and healthcare policy, particularly in regions prone to similar epidemics.</li> </ul> <p>These adjustments would increase the manuscript’s relevance and readability for a diverse audience, including policymakers, healthcare providers, and public health researchers.</p> <p>No, there do not appear to be ethical issues in this manuscript. As a scoping review of existing literature, the study does not involve new data collection, human participants, or personal data, which minimizes ethical concerns. The manuscript mentions that it adheres to ethical standards for literature reviews, and no new ethical approvals were necessary. The authors have appropriately acknowledged the contributions of previous studies and have declared no competing interests, which aligns with ethical standards for scholarly research.</p> |  |

**PART 2:**

|  | Reviewer’s comment  | Author’s comment (if agreed with reviewer, correct the manuscript and highlight that part in the manuscript. It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here) |
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| <p><b>Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?</b></p> | <p><i>(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)</i></p> |   |

**Reviewer Details:**

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|---|---|
| <p>Name:</p>                                | <p><b>Esther Osime</b></p>  |
| <p>Department, University &amp; Country</p> | <p><b>East Tennessee State University, United States of America</b></p> |