

PEER REVIEW HISTORY

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ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	Access to Medicines in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC): a scoping study
AUTHORS	Luiza, Vera Lucia; Emmerick, Isabel; Oliveira, Maria Auxiliadora; Azeredo, Thiago; Bigdeli, Maryam

VERSION 1 - REVIEW

REVIEWER	Dr. Ileana Heredia Pi Researcher National Institute of Public Health Mexico
REVIEW RETURNED	28-Dec-2012

THE STUDY	In the methods section, authors did not describe the type of statistical analysis realized and presented in results section. Authors present correlation coefficients but they did not refer to that analysis in the description of methodology section.
RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS	Article would be enriched very much by the fact that authors discuss the positionings / contributions of the principals articles checked in the analyzed categories. There is a need of a deeper analysis of the content of the selected articles to allow not only to identify the perspective from which it had been written and the domains or topics analysed there, and in addition to explain which is the main contribution of these articles and which are the principal convergent or divergent points identified in the analysis.

REVIEWER	Anahi Dreser, researcher, National Institute of Public Health, Mexico. Hereby I declare that I don't have any competing interests.
REVIEW RETURNED	26-Jan-2013

THE STUDY	<p>-Supplementary files include figures already included in the manuscript.</p> <p>-The methods are adequately described. However, in Box 1 (p. 12, lines 25-26) the search term in Spanish "Medicamentos ESSENCIALES" is misspelled; "ESENCIALES" is the correct word in Spanish. Please explain if this is only a typo error while writing the manuscript, or if the search term was incorrect. If the search term was incorrect, this might have introduced a bias against relevant papers written in Spanish (see below an example of papers not included in the study).</p> <p>Molina-Salazar RE, González-Marín E, Carbajal de Nova C. Competencia y precios en el mercado farmacéutico mexicano. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S496-S503.</p>
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	<p>Tobar F. Lecciones aprendidas en la provisión de medicamentos para la atención primaria de la salud. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S463-S469.</p> <p>Garrido-Latorre F, Hernández-Llamas H, Gómez-Dantés O. Surtimiento de recetas a los afiliados al Seguro Popular de Salud de México. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S429-S436.</p>
GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>This is well-researched and clearly written paper, of importance in its field. I suggest only two minor additional revisions.</p> <p>1) In Box 1 (p. 12, lines 40-41) the reference "WHO, 2010 #2439" is not clear and apparently it is not in the references list.</p> <p>2) In page 8 (line 11) is stated that "only five countries in the region have health research agendas", which might be misleading. Please clarify if "official health research priority agendas" should be used instead.</p>

REVIEWER	<p>Lindsay Ritz, M.P.H. Assistant Program Manager Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics Brigham and Women's Hospital Harvard Medical School</p> <p>I declare that I have no significant competing financial, professional or personal interests that might have influenced the performance or presentation of this review.</p>
REVIEW RETURNED	02-Feb-2013

THE STUDY	<p>In terms of English language - the article is really almost there, but it needs a bit more proofreading in terms English usage/grammar.</p> <p>In terms of limitations - I'd be interested to see what happened over the last two years in the literature, (2011 and 2012) and if there is an even bigger increase in papers published, perhaps that could be noted without needing to rewrite the paper. It is a limitation that the study ends in late 2010.</p>
RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS	<p>I am concerned that they used first author country of origin rather than the standard corresponding author country of origin. If indeed it's first author country, that is fine, but in the papers, corresponding author country is the one listed.</p>
GENERAL COMMENTS	<p>In terms of the line about Brazil's contribution being steady since 2002, perhaps the reason there appears to be a spike is the fact that Ritz et al could not capture the Portuguese papers adequately since PubMed was the only search engine used. There has been an increase in English articles coming out of Brazil as noted by the study authors.</p>

VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Reviewer	Comment	Answer
<p>Dr. Ileana Heredia Pi Researcher National Institute of Public Health Mexico</p>	<p>In the methods section, authors did not describe the type of statistical analysis realized and presented in results section. Authors present correlation coefficients but they did not refer to that analysis in the description of methodology section.</p>	<p>Included in the methods section:</p> <p>“Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were calculated to characterize distribution of papers according to the variables and categories mentioned above. Linear regression was performed to test the relationship between number of papers and year of publication. The strength and direction of this association was estimated by calculating the correlation coefficient (Pearson’s r) and its statistical significance (p-value). Data linearity fit was expressed by coefficient of determination (R²). Identified trends were depicted on scatter plots.”</p>
	<p>Article would be enriched very much by the fact that authors discuss the positionings / contributions of the principals articles checked in the analyzed categories. There is a need of a deeper analysis of the content of the selected articles to allow not only to identify the perspective from which it had been written and the domains or topics analysed there, and in addition to explain which is the main contribution of these articles and which are the principal convergent or divergent points identified in the analysis.</p>	<p>This is a very interesting point for future analysis and publications.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the aim of the present study was to identify research gaps as related to the frameworks discussed (ATM Domains, and Health System levels). Additionally, in the context of the AHPSR, it was important to identify relevant issues and themes that have been insufficiently investigated and so should receive greater attention in future research.</p> <p>We assessed that a scoping study would better fit these objectives. Following Levac et al (2010) proposal for scoping studies, we used an analytic framework and a thematic construction “to provide an overview of the breadth of the literature but not a synthesis”(page 3)</p> <p>In our opinion, the new analysis proposed would diverge the</p>

Reviewer	Comment	Answer
		paper discussion from its stated objectives.
<p>Anahi Dreser, researcher, National Institute of Public Health, Mexico. Hereby I declare that I don't have any competing interests.</p>	<p>-Supplementary files include figures already included in the manuscript.</p> <p>-The methods are adequately described. However, in Box 1 (p. 12, lines 25-26) the search term in Spanish "Medicamentos ESSENCIALES" is misspelled; "ESENCIALES" is the correct word in Spanish. Please explain if this is only a typo error while writing the manuscript, or if the search term was incorrect. If the search term was incorrect, this might have introduced a bias against relevant papers written in Spanish (see below an example of papers not included in the study). Molina-Salazar RE, González-Marín E, Carbajal de Nova C. Competencia y precios en el mercado farmacéutico mexicano. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S496-S503. Tobar F. Lecciones aprendidas en la provisión de medicamentos para la atención primaria de la salud. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S463-S469. Garrido-Latorre F, Hernández-Llamas H, Gómez-Dantés O. Surtimiento de recetas a los afiliados al Seguro Popular de Salud de México. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S429-S436.</p>	<p>They will be excluded from the supplementary files in the new update.</p> <p>It was a misspelling problem in Box 1. However, for the sake of reliability, we double-checked our data by performing a new search using the correct term and comparing the results. No bias was introduced in the study, once both results matched.</p> <p>With regards to the example papers referred by the reviewer, comments bellow.</p> <p>1) Molina-Salazar RE, González-Marín E, Carbajal de Nova C. Competencia y precios en el mercado farmacéutico mexicano. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S496-S503. R. This article is an "essay" (<i>ensayo</i>). As explained in the methodology, position papers and essays were not included.</p> <p>2) Tobar F. Lecciones aprendidas en la provisión de medicamentos para la atención primaria de la salud. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S463-S469. R. It's a review article. It doesn't comply with the following inclusion criteria "For review articles, some additional inclusion criteria applied: it must include information on how the literature search was done and which scientifically recognized index was used; selection criteria must define the type of articles accepted." (extracted from methodology)</p>

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	<p>This is well-researched and clearly written paper, of importance in its field. I suggest only two minor additional revisions.</p> <p>1) In Box 1 (p. 12, lines 40-41) the reference "WHO, 2010 #2439" is not clear and apparently it is not in the references list.</p> <p>2) In page 8 (line 11) is stated that "only five countries in the region have health research agendas", which might be misleading. Please clarify if "official health research priority agendas" should be used instead.</p>	<p>3) Garrido-Latorre F, Hernández-Llamas H, Gómez-Dantés O. Surtimiento de recetas a los afiliados al Seguro Popular de Salud de México. Salud Publica Mex 2008;50 supl 4:S429-S436.</p> <p>R. The article's descriptors and key words do not match those defined and used in this study. Also, the authors didn't define their paper as having "access to medicines" as an important object. The selection of descriptors was a very difficult task, for which we counted on the support of a literature search expert (a librarian). As mentioned on the manuscript: "Since "access to medicines" is not a Mesh term and the existing Mesh terms are not suitable, a broad range of terms were used in order to get the best possible coverage of relevant papers." This is one of the limitations described in the paper, and well recognized in any systematic literature search.</p> <p>1) Reference included in the Box 1 - AHPSR, (Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research) (2012). Access to Medicines – Priority setting for a health policy and systems research agenda Access to Medicines Global Stakeholders Meeting. ARPHSP. Bangkok, Thailand, ARPHSP.</p> <p>2) It was included in the paper as suggested by the reviewer.</p>
<p>Lindsay Ritz, M.P.H. Assistant Program Manager Division of Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacoeconomics Brigham and Women's Hospital Harvard Medical School</p>	<p>In terms of English language - the article is really almost there, but it needs a bit more proofreading in terms English usage/grammar.</p> <p>In terms of limitations - I'd be interested to see what happened over the last two years in the literature, (2011 and 2012) and if there is an even bigger increase in papers published, perhaps that could be noted without needing to rewrite the paper. It is a limitation that the study ends in late 2010.</p>	<p>Manuscript was revised, but those changes on English writing were not highlighted on the text, because they were minor changes throughout the text.</p> <p>It was Included in the paper as a suggestion by the reviewer – "Finally, despite the fact that the study covered a large period of 10 years, the search was limited to late 2010 and does not account for papers published in 2011 and 2012. This is a relative limitation as trends over time are analyzed and reveal significant changes over the past decade."</p>

Reviewer	Comment	Answer
	<p>I am concerned that they used first author country of origin rather than the standard corresponding author country of origin. If indeed it's first author country, that is fine, but in the papers, corresponding author country is the one listed.</p>	<p>It was used the first author's country of residence as listed in the paper - not the corresponding author. This "field" was extracted from the papers by the reviewers.</p>
	<p>In terms of the line about Brazil's contribution being steady since 2002, perhaps the reason there appears to be a spike is the fact that Ritz et al could not capture the Portuguese papers adequately since PubMed was the only search engine used. There has been an increase in English articles coming out of Brazil as noted by the study authors.</p>	<p>It is just a comment – no action needed. We might include that information in the manuscript.</p>

