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A decade of Acceptability Research with Adolescents in Africa: Systematic review and evidence map

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Abstract

Interventions aimed at improving adolescent developmental outcomes are more likely to be successful if the young people they target find them acceptable. However, no standard definitions or indicators exist to assess acceptability, acceptability research with adolescents in LMICs is still limited, and no known reviews synthesise the evidence from Africa.

We conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed studies assessing intervention acceptability with young adults (aged 10-24) in Africa, published between January 2010 and June 2020. This paper maps and qualitatively synthesizes the scope, characteristics, and findings of these studies, including definitions of acceptability, methods used, the type and objectives of interventions assessed, and overall findings on adolescent acceptability.

The review was carried out in line with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). Key word searches generated 4692 unique records and 55 final eligible studies, assessing 60 interventions. Most studies were conducted in Southern Africa, of which 32 jointly in South Africa and Uganda. The majority of interventions assessed for acceptability could be classified as HIV or HPV vaccine interventions (10), E-health (10), HIV testing interventions (8), support group interventions (7) and contraceptive interventions (6). The objectives of most interventions were linked to SDG3, specifically to HIV and sexual and reproductive health. Acceptability was overall high among these published studies. 22 studies provided reasons for acceptability or lack thereof, some specific to particular types of interventions and others common across intervention types.

Our review exposes considerable scope for future acceptability research and review work. This should include: extending acceptability research beyond the health (and particularly HIV) sector and to regions in Africa where this type of research is still scarce; including adolescents earlier, and potentially throughout the intervention process; further conceptualising the construct of acceptability among adolescents and beyond, and examining the relationship between acceptability and uptake.

Key words: acceptability; adolescents; youth; interventions; Africa

Strengths and limitations of this study

- This is the first review to aggregate and synthesise a decade of acceptability studies with adolescents in Africa, we believe this study makes a valuable contribution to the African and global literature on acceptability.
- This review highlights the overall high level of acceptability of the interventions assessed, and some of the reasons why adolescents and young adults may or may not find interventions acceptable– both specific to particular types of interventions and common across intervention types.
- There was a geographical coverage in our review, particularly in West, Central and North Africa. This could be as a result of confining our search to English language publications which may have excluded some studies from African countries where French is the first language.

Key Questions

What is already known?

- Addressing the developmental needs of adolescents in African countries is critical if the continent is to achieve its sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- Many interventions aimed at strengthening adolescent developmental outcomes have not achieved desired impact, and adolescent involvement is often poorly envisaged and implemented.
- Uptake and effectiveness of interventions is likely to be higher if these interventions are acceptable to adolescent end-users.

What are the new findings?

- Acceptability of interventions assessed in Africa was generally high among adolescents.
- Understanding of the intervention, ease of use, adequate emotional support, autonomy, confidentiality and protection from stigma were key overarching themes explaining why young people found interventions acceptable

What do the new findings imply?

- Intervention developers and implementers across the continent should pay attention to these key aspects of interventions and their delivery.
- It is important to strengthen adolescents' understanding of interventions, involve adolescents early on in intervention development, and engage with the broader context within which adolescent acceptability is shaped.
- There is a need for more acceptability research in important areas for adolescent development beyond (physical) health and, within the health sector, beyond HIV.

Background

Addressing the developmental needs of adolescents in African countries is critical if the continent is to achieve its sustainable development goals (SDGs), and envisaged transformation articulated in the African Union's overarching Agenda 2063 (1, 2). Adolescents make up the largest generation of their age group in history (3), and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) accounts for over 20% of the estimated 1.8 billion adolescents and young adults globally (4). Investing in adolescent wellbeing can have positive effects for individuals during adolescence and beyond, as well as potential positive societal effects. Interventions that reduce the consequences of poverty among adolescents, or lead to more positive behaviours, can influence development and wellbeing during adolescence and throughout the life course (5-7). Investment during adolescence can strengthen early childhood investments and reduce the burden of morbidity and mortality in adulthood (8). Moreover, it has been argued that investment in adolescents can help realize the 'demographic dividend' (9, 10), and reduce generational inequalities (11).

Substantial investment has been made globally in adolescent interventions focusing on areas such as sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, uptake of vaccines and prevention of substance abuse (12). Unfortunately these interventions have not always recorded impressive impact (13). Data from both high-income countries (HICs) and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) reveal that many interventions focusing on adolescents are fragmented, poorly designed, and unequal in quality (14). One reason for this may be an insufficient understanding of the particular nature of adolescence (15).

Adolescence is a critical period characterised by rapid development of the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional capabilities that are instrumental across their life-course (3). Adolescence is also a time of gathering independence and the pathways to learning and experiencing such independence are varied, with experiential learning playing a key role. The rapid growth associated with this phase and its influences on behaviour need to be well understood in order to design timely and effective interventions (16).

Interventions may also fail to sufficiently consider the diverse environments in which adolescents live, that may shape their decisions and behaviour (17). This may lead to interveners missing important factors that, if unaddressed, will prevent the intervention from having the desired impact. Additionally, program implementers may lack the specialized skills necessary for delivering and sustaining these interventions (12). Adult interventions may not translate directly for adolescent audiences and programme adjustments may be inadequate.

Since most interventions seek to effect adolescent behavioural change, many of the obstacles to uptake and effectiveness could be addressed by affording sufficient importance to the perspectives and participation of adolescents themselves. When adolescents feel coerced to engage in a particular behaviour or accept interventions that they don't identify with, they are more likely to resist the message of the proposed intervention, or to stop participating altogether (18). Instead, interventions that are

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3 acceptable to adolescent end-users are likely to have higher social validity (19), uptake
4 and effectiveness (20, 21).
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7 However, adolescent involvement and input in intervention design has been varied, and
8 models of adolescent inclusion have been poorly envisaged and implemented. There is
9 still a relatively low number of acceptability studies among adolescents in LMICs and
10 specifically in Africa, particularly beyond the health sector (19, 20). To our knowledge no
11 existing reviews comprehensively map the extant body of acceptability research in Africa
12 and aggregate the evidence emerging from these studies. Furthermore, there is no clear
13 and standard definition of acceptability (20) in Africa and beyond. This in turn raises
14 several methodological challenges when setting out to assess acceptability, including the
15 choice of measurement frameworks and tools (20). It also highlights the scope for
16 further conceptualisation of this construct, particularly in specific populations and
17 geographical regions.
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21 We conducted a systematic review to identify studies that conducted primary research
22 with adolescents and young adults (10-24) in Africa over the past decade (January 2010-
23 June 2020), to assess the acceptability of interventions aimed at positively influencing
24 their developmental outcomes. This paper maps and qualitatively synthesizes the scope,
25 characteristics, and overall findings of studies identified. This includes evidence
26 addressing the questions of whether and how the construct of acceptability is
27 conceptualised and defined within these studies, the methods and indicators used, the
28 type and key objectives of interventions assessed, as well as evidence on what
29 adolescents find acceptable and why. Based on these findings, we aim to discuss
30 implications for future adolescent-focused interventions in Africa and identify gaps for
31 future acceptability research with this population.
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39 **Methods**

40 **Search strategy**

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42 The systematic review was carried out in line with the Preferred Reporting Items for
43 Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). We used the PICO (Population,
44 Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) criteria (22) to help determine eligibility criteria for
45 inclusion develop the search strategy and composite search terms developed (see Table
46 S1). We searched 8 online databases (listed in Table S1), covering a wide range of
47 behavioural science research, and searched the reference lists of eligible papers.
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53 **Study selection and data extraction**

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55 Papers were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: if they (i) reported
56 primary research assessing acceptability (based on the authors' definition of the study or
57 findings) of one or more intervention(s) with adolescents and young adults 10-24; (ii)
58 assessed acceptability of intervention(s) aimed at positively influencing one or more
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3 development outcome(s), as defined by SDG indicators; (iii) reported on research
4 conducted in Africa; (iv) were in the English Language; (v) were peer-reviewed and; (vi)
5 were published between 1st January 2010 and 30th June 2020. We did not include limiters
6 for study design or methodological tools, type of intervention or sector, or type of
7 developmental outcome the intervention intended to influence. To be as inclusive as
8 possible, we included studies that worked with broader samples (e.g., youth and adults)
9 but disaggregated the results and reported findings specifically for the age group of
10 interest (10-24).
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14 We imported all references from the online databases into Endnote, where duplicates
15 were identified and removed. Abstracts were reviewed independently by the two first
16 authors to determine relevance. Full text of potentially eligible studies were retrieved
17 and independently examined by the same two authors; areas of disagreement or lack of
18 clarity were resolved through discussion by the two authors and – where necessary – the
19 assessment of a third author. Reasons for exclusion of each paper not deemed eligible
20 were recorded in an excel spread sheet. We developed a detailed extraction sheet, using
21 Excel software, to extract key characteristics and findings of eligible papers. For
22 reliability, the information for each paper was extracted separately by at least two of the
23 first three authors and differences were resolved through discussion among the authors.
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28 **Patient and public involvement**

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30 Patients and the public were not involved in the preparation of this study.
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32 **Results**

33 ***Eligible studies included in the review***

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36 Figure 1 presents the PRISMA flow diagram describing the process of study selection and
37 reasons for study exclusion. A total of 4692 titles and abstracts were screened after
38 removing duplicates, 278 articles were subjected to a full-text review, and a final 55
39 studies were considered eligible for inclusion in the review.
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42 **Figure 1 here:**

43 ***Study characteristics: publication year, location and sample***

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46 Below we present a summary of key characteristics of the 55 eligible studies included in
47 our review. More than half of the papers were published between 2018-2020 with 22% of
48 the papers published in 2019, as shown in the supplementary figure S1.
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51 Fig.2 below provides a visual representation of the location of studies on the continent.
52 There is a clear concentration of acceptability studies in South and East Africa, with
53 approximately half of identified studies conducted in South Africa (19) and Uganda (13).
54 Only seven studies were from West and Central Africa and only one from North Africa.
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56 **Figure 2 here:**

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58 The supplementary table S2 provides information on study characteristics and overall
59 findings for the entire list of eligible studies, and by each type of intervention category
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3 (as indicated below) in separate sheets. Most (41) study samples included male and
4 female participants, while 11 studies worked only with females and three with males only.
5 44 studies worked with samples that fell entirely within the specified age range (10-24),
6 while 11 included studies worked with broader samples (e.g., youth and adults) but
7 disaggregated the results and reported findings specifically for the age group of interest.
8 To be as inclusive as possible, we included 10 studies that did not clearly specify the exact
9 age range of participants, but for which available information indicated that the sample
10 would have been entirely or almost entirely within this range (e.g. secondary school and
11 university students (23-28) or where sample descriptive data indicated a sample
12 consisting almost entirely of participants 24 or younger (29-31).
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17 While our inclusion criteria focused on primary acceptability research with adolescents
18 and young adults, it should be noted that 25 studies also collected acceptability data
19 from other stakeholders. These include caregivers or other family members (32-40),
20 teachers, facilitators (26, 41, 42), community leaders or gate keepers, (28, 43), peer
21 mentors, service providers and healthcare workers (29, 44-51).
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26 ***Types and objectives of interventions assessed for acceptability.***

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28 We categorised interventions assessed for acceptability both by type of intervention,
29 based on their key components (see Figure 3), and stated objectives of the interventions
30 (see Figure 4). In terms of type of intervention, interventions were classified as HIV or
31 HPV vaccine interventions (10), E-health (10), HIV testing interventions (8), support group
32 interventions (7), contraceptive interventions (6), voluntary medical male circumcision
33 programs (VMMC) (4), school-based sexual and reproductive health education (4),
34 economic support programs (4) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) (2). Five studies did
35 not fit into the above intervention categories and were grouped as 'other'; they
36 consisted respectively of nutritional therapy, a psychosocial - home based care
37 intervention, a counselling support intervention to address substance abuse, cervical
38 cancer screening and a rectal microbicide intervention for HIV prevention. It should be
39 noted that two of the studies reviewed assessed more than one intervention (45, 52) (3
40 and 4 respectively), so that the total number of interventions assessed for acceptability
41 was 60.
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47 **Figure 3 here:**

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49 More detail on intervention sub-types is included in Table S2. For example, E-health
50 interventions included game based (1), SMS based (7) and internet-based (2) programs.
51 All 7 support group interventions provided psychosocial or educational support related
52 to HIV, and 5 worked only with young adults living with HIV. One group intervention was
53 delivered through both a social media platform and in-person meetings (53), one was a
54 family based support intervention with adolescent-parent dyads (33), four were linked to
55 public healthcare facilities (42, 47, 54, 55) and one was a community intervention (43).
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3 The primary objectives of most interventions were focused on HIV- or sexual and
4 reproductive health-related outcomes (see Figure 4): 19 primarily aimed to prevent new
5 HIV infections, ten to prevent HPV infection, nine to increase HIV treatment adherence
6 and retention in care, eight to increase the uptake of HIV testing, eight aimed at
7 increasing contraceptive uptake and reducing early childbearing and six provided
8 psychosocial support for adolescents living with HIV (42).
9

10
11 The objectives of almost all interventions were therefore linked to indicators within SDG3
12 (ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being). However, one study could also be
13 linked to SDG2 (food security and improved nutrition), 6 to SDG4 (inclusive and equitable
14 quality education), 8 to SDG5 (gender equality) and 1 to SDG6 (access to water and
15 sanitation).
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19 **Figure 4 here:**

20 **Definitions and conceptual frameworks for acceptability**

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22 Only seven of the 55 reviewed studies provided an explicit definition of acceptability and
23 only six used a conceptual framework (as indicated in Table S2). Three definitions
24 focused on the preference for or willingness to use the intervention: Tonen-Wolyec et al
25 (2019) defined acceptability as consenting to and using the (HIV self-testing)
26 intervention; Smith, Wallace (30) defined it as the preference for using the (HIV self-
27 testing) device³³; and Katahoire et al (2013) defined acceptability as the willingness or
28 reluctance to use and complete the intervention (in this case the 3 doses of HPV vaccine)
29 (56).
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34 Two definitions focused mainly on responses to the intervention. MacCarthy et al (2020)
35 (48) referred to a definition and framework developed by Sekhon et al (2017)(20) and
36 defined acceptability as the cognitive and emotional responses to an intervention (20,
37 48). Parker et al (2013) (42) defined acceptability as how the intended individual
38 recipients react to a program, guided by the Bowen feasibility framework (57). A further
39 two studies conceptualized acceptability as an implementation outcome and focused on
40 value, appeal and likeability: Kibel et al (2019)(58) referred to the perception among
41 stakeholders that a certain element of the program was valued, agreeable, or
42 satisfactory, while Sabben et al (2019)(34) defined acceptability as appeal, relevance,
43 value, usability, and understandability, based on the Technology Acceptance Model's
44 (TAM) framework (59).
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49 Three studies referred to a conceptual framework but did not provide an explicit
50 definition of acceptability. In their assessment of individual and environmental barriers
51 and facilitators related to use of a school-based contraception clinic, Khoza et al (2019)
52 referred to the social ecological framework (60). Sayles et al's (2010) study was guided
53 by value-expectancy and social marketing theories (61); the authors investigated vaccine
54 attitudes, normative vaccine beliefs, and perceived risk and severity of HIV as
55 determinants of HIV vaccine uptake. Turiho et al's (2017) study used the symbolic
56 interactionism theory (62) and some aspects of the Health Beliefs Model (HBM) to
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3 explain how community members' perceptions and their interaction shape vaccine
4 acceptability.
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8 **Study design, methods and indicators**

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10 Sixteen studies included in this review (29%) assessed 'anticipated' or prospective
11 acceptability among adolescents who had not (yet) received the intervention (20). 18
12 studies (33%) assessed acceptability concurrently, during the delivery of the intervention,
13 while 14 (25%) assessed acceptability post-intervention, retrospectively. The remaining
14 seven (13%) of the studies assessed interventions prospectively and retrospectively;
15 among these, two studies worked with separate groups of adolescents who had received
16 and not yet received the intervention (52, 63), while the remaining 5 interviewed
17 adolescents at two different stages of the intervention (40, 44, 55, 64, 65). Five studies
18 involved adolescents in the study design (43, 50, 53, 55, 65).
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23 20 studies described their methodology as solely qualitative, 18 as quantitative and 17 as
24 mixed methods. 11 of the qualitative studies used only focus group discussions (FGDS), 7
25 used only in-depth interviews (IDIs) and 2 used both methods. Most of the quantitative
26 studies (15) employed structured survey questionnaires. The mixed methods studies
27 combined FGDs or IDIs with survey questionnaires, online surveys and evaluation reports.
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30 As detailed in the supplementary table S2, a wide range of questions and indicators were
31 used to measure acceptability. None of the studies used a standardized previously
32 validated instrument, although two papers drew from existing instruments (66, 67). The
33 majority of questions asked across studies covered participants' overall perceptions and
34 experience of the intervention, willingness to use the intervention, understanding of the
35 intervention, barriers and facilitators of access and use, the perceived effectiveness of
36 the intervention and willingness to recommend or distribute it to others.
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40 **Acceptability findings**

41
42 Overall, acceptability of interventions assessed was high. Of the 55 studies, 30 assessed
43 acceptability quantitatively and reported on the proportion of young adults in the sample
44 that found the intervention acceptable. While some studies quantified acceptability
45 through a single percentage, based on one question or indicator, a number of studies
46 reported a range, based on multiple questions or indicators. One of the reviewed studies
47 reported 100% acceptability (33), while acceptability ranged from 64% - 100% in 25 studies
48 and 46% - 61% in 2 studies (27, 52, 68, 69). Only two studies clearly reported acceptability
49 below 50%: at 37% for a contraceptive intervention in Tanzania (70) and 27% for an HPV
50 vaccine study in Morocco (71). Reasons given for low acceptability of the contraceptive
51 intervention were that adolescents and their peers were too young to be sensitized
52 about condoms, that condoms would not be used properly and that using contraception
53 was a sin (70). Reasons were not provided by adolescents for the Moroccan study;
54 however, in quantitative analysis, older age, female gender, studying at a public (versus
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private) school and lower educational attainment were associated with lower odds of acceptability for the HPV vaccine (71).

The remaining 25 studies did not quantify acceptability. However, the authors of two of these studies reported that adolescents found the interventions to be unacceptable, based on their overall findings. One study in South Africa assessed contraceptive interventions (32); a key reason for low acceptability was the belief that a school-based contraceptive clinic (SBCC) could promote promiscuity by sending a message that 'teenage sex was acceptable' and making contraceptives easily accessible (32). The second study assessed a psychosocial home based care intervention in Tanzania (72), which adolescent participants felt did not align well with their expectations. They believed the intervention to be more relevant to their caregivers and were disappointed in the lack of financial support in a context of widespread poverty (72).

Findings of the remaining 51 studies overall indicated high levels of acceptability. Some of these studies also provided various reasons as to why adolescents found the interventions acceptable (n=22) or (for a minority of adolescents) not acceptable (n=20). These are presented in Table 1, by type of intervention, for studies with both low and high overall acceptability. The main reasons e-Health interventions were acceptable to adolescents were: knowledge gained from the intervention regarding their sexual health (34, 65), the privacy these interventions provided (23, 48) and knowing how to make use of the intervention (25, 34). Adolescents who instead did not find these interventions acceptable felt that the content was not culturally appropriate (23, 25, 65), highlighted technological glitches (48, 50, 65) or were concerned with inclusiveness where, for example, not all the young adults had access to a necessary device or risked unintended disclosure of private information when sharing devices (65, 73).

Confidentiality, appropriateness, privacy and decision-making autonomy were among the reasons adolescents found HIV testing interventions (including self-testing and testing in schools) acceptable (42, 44, 53, 64, 74). Fear of the procedure, concerns with the cost and validity of the test, and inadequate emotional support were reasons given for lack of acceptability (64, 75, 76). Support group interventions were considered acceptable because of the emotional support provided and because young adults found the groups to be empowering and were able to discuss HIV-related issues in a stigma-free environment (42, 47, 53, 55).

Knowledge was a key reason for high vaccine acceptability for both HPV and HIV vaccine interventions. For example, adolescents' understanding that HPV vaccines could prevent cervical cancer and HIV made them more likely to accept the interventions (63). Conversely, lack of knowledge or understanding of the intervention was linked to low acceptability (36, 52, 56). Other reasons given for acceptability were greater female autonomy and agency to protect themselves, in the event of sexual violence or transactional sex, and encouragement of peers (36, 58, 63). On the other hand, perceived cost, myths and distrust of vaccine providers, and fear of side effects, were themes raised to explain low acceptability (61, 77).

Reasons for acceptability of economic support interventions included financial autonomy (78) and the freedom to decide how to use cash transfers (28). However, concerns around the process of selecting which individuals or households were to receive transfers, as well as inclusion, sustainability and effects on social relations and social equity within the community (38, 78), were factors that threatened acceptability.

Table 1: Reasons provided by adolescents for acceptability and unacceptability of interventions, by type of intervention.

Type of intervention	Reasons given for acceptability	Reasons given for unacceptability
eHealth	<p>Knowledge provided on sexual health and HIV ^{27,37}</p> <p>Privacy ^{25,51}</p> <p>Increased self-efficacy to manage risky situations³⁷</p> <p>Ease of use ³⁷</p> <p>Supportive mentors ³²</p> <p>Freedom to talk openly to mentors about HIV status and disclosure ³²</p>	<p>Visual content considered not culturally appropriate ²⁵</p> <p>Conservative views about certain topics discussed (e.g., oral sex) ^{27,70}</p> <p>Concerns around access and inclusiveness, as not all youth owned devices ^{70,78}</p> <p>Fear of accidental disclosure of confidential information through device-sharing ⁷⁸</p> <p>Technical glitches with devices ^{51,53,70}</p>
Vaccines	<p>Protection from HPV in the case of sexual abuse or transactional sex ³⁹</p> <p>Protection from HIV infection when the transmission risk is out of an individual's control ^{48,63}</p> <p>Desire to have unprotected sex for child-bearing (women on HIV-vaccine) ⁶³</p> <p>Being able to have unprotected sex and multiple sexual partners (male adolescents on HIV vaccine)⁶³</p> <p>Protection in serodiscordant relationships while avoiding the HIV stigma and costs related to buying condoms (male adolescents on HIV vaccine) ⁴⁸</p>	<p>Distrust of government and scientists ⁶³</p> <p>Association of vaccine uptake with promiscuity ⁶³</p> <p>Fear of HIV testing and HIV stigma ⁶³</p> <p>Cost of vaccine ⁶³</p> <p>Fear of vaccine side effects ^{31,54,63,68}</p> <p>Fear of injection ³¹</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about vaccine and cervical cancer ^{39,58,67}</p>
HIV testing	<p>Confidentiality of HIV self-testing at schools ^{47,81 79}</p> <p>Ease of use of HIV self-test ^{47,81}</p> <p>Fast results of self-test⁴⁷</p> <p>Ability to test independently with self-test ⁶⁹</p> <p>Opportunity to know HIV status, for peace of mind and to plan for the future (provider-initiated testing) ⁴²</p> <p>Lower waiting time, less distance to facility, and friendlier staff at mobile (versus 'conventional') clinic⁷²</p>	<p>Concern with validity of HIVST self-test kit results ^{69,81}</p> <p>Costs of HIV test kit ⁶⁹</p> <p>Lack of emotional support with self-test^{69,81}</p> <p>Fear of the procedure (finger prick) ^{33 80}</p> <p>Belief that school is not the right place for HIV testing ⁷⁹</p> <p>Lack of privacy and risk of stigma through school testing ⁷⁹</p>
Support group	<p>Emotional and social support provided ^{45,50,55,57}</p> <p>Knowledge and skills provided ^{45,57}</p> <p>Enjoyed participating ⁵⁵</p>	

	Stigma free environment ⁵⁶ Confidential space to openly discuss sexual health and behavior ^{45,55} Greater decision-making autonomy to negotiate safer sexual relationships ⁴⁵	
SRH education	Increased knowledge on sexual and reproductive health ^{26,44} Supportive teachers at youth clubs ⁴⁴ Girls more comfortable attending school during menstruation ²⁶	Conservative views about certain topics discussed (linked to sexual intercourse) ⁴⁴
VMMC	Material support provided during the intervention (e.g. food, shelter and security) ⁶⁰ Knowledge gained through participation ⁶⁰	Penile swelling after removal and transient discoloration of inner foreskin ⁸²
Economic support	Increased school retention ^{30,41,83} Financial autonomy ^{30,83} Easy access to cash transfer ³⁰	Concerns with sustainability and impact of transfer termination ⁸³ Exclusion of certain households or individuals in the community from receiving transfers ^{30,41} Perception that selection process was unfair ⁴¹ Lack of interest in family planning services accessible through (conditional) benefit cards ⁸⁴
Contraception	Ease of use of self-injectable and female contraceptives ^{71,85} Privacy and convenience of self-injectable contraceptives ⁸⁵ Female autonomy to control female contraceptive use ^{48,71} Condom fatigue and HIV fear ⁴⁸	Conservative views on condom use and messaging (e.g. using condoms is a sin, condoms may encourage early sexual debut) ^{35,75} Belief that adolescents are too young for condom promotion and sexual activity ³ Fear of needles and self-injection for injectable contraceptives ⁸⁵ Concerns with not being able to use condoms properly ⁷⁵ Belief that condoms cause AIDS and other diseases ⁷⁵ Concerns about the effect of cervical contraceptive being in the body for a long time ⁷¹ Concern with stigma ⁴⁸ Waiting times at health facilities ⁴⁸
PrEP	Prevents transmission in serodiscordant couples ⁴⁸ Easy to use ⁴⁸	Conflict with traditional methods and beliefs ⁴⁸ Fear of side effects ⁴⁸
Psychosocial home-based care		Program more relevant to caregiver versus adolescent needs ⁷⁷ Lack of financial support in a context of widespread poverty ⁷⁷

Discussion

Findings of this review indicate two positive trends. The first is an increase, over the past decade, in the number of acceptability studies with adolescents on the continent. Though numbers are overall low, this could signal increasing recognition of the value of engaging young people when designing and implementing interventions intended for them. The second is that acceptability of interventions assessed was generally high. This suggests an overall good alignment of interventions with adolescent needs and preferences. However, we should also be aware of the possibility of publication bias (79, 80), as research showing less favourable acceptability results may be less likely to be written up and published. A key limitation of this review is that we did not include grey

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3 literature, given available resources, the review's already broad scope, and to ensure a
4 minimum quality of studies included. We also did not conduct a quality assessment, given
5 the heterogeneity of interventions assessed and study designs; however, we note that
6 this is not a requirement of a mapping review, which aims to summarise available
7 evidence in an area versus focus on a particular research question (81-83).
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10 11 12 **Acceptability findings** 13

14 Despite the diversity of intervention settings, types of interventions and modes of
15 delivery across studies, several common themes emerged from reasons given by
16 adolescents to explain why specific interventions were acceptable to them. These
17 included the product or intervention being easy to use, knowledge of the intervention or
18 knowledge provided by the intervention, the intervention allowing for (greater)
19 autonomy, adolescents feeling supported while participating in the intervention and
20 feeling assured that their privacy and confidential information would be protected.
21 Although reasons for 'unacceptability' were more diverse, overarching themes could also
22 be identified among these, for example: conservative views about the intervention or its
23 content; concerns around intervention costs, access and inclusiveness; fear of pain and
24 side effects (for biomedical interventions); stigma, myths or distrust; and lack of
25 knowledge or support. While certain drivers of unacceptability mirrored those of
26 acceptability (e.g. knowledge and support), these drivers mostly differed, suggesting
27 that acceptability and unacceptability are not necessarily represented by one continuum.
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35 These findings suggest that intervention developers and implementers across the
36 continent should pay attention to key aspects of interventions and their delivery that
37 adolescents clearly care about, and seek to address these from the intervention
38 development phase. They should ensure that adolescents are provided with adequate
39 knowledge, training and resources to properly understand the intervention and feel
40 confident in their ability to use it, that they have access to sufficient logistical and
41 emotional support while participating, and that their confidential information is
42 protected, so that they are in turn protected from much-feared stigma and other
43 potential negative social consequences. Moreover, they should bear in mind that
44 adolescents value autonomy and that this has a gender dimension. Autonomy relates not
45 only to being able to choose to participate in and use an intervention, but also being
46 empowered by the knowledge it may provide and the greater control it may afford
47 young people (particularly young women) in managing high risk situations and unequal
48 relationships.
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56 It may also be worth paying particular attention to acceptability findings for specific
57 types of interventions, given current African and global public health challenges. For
58 example, the role of digital technology in achieving many of the SDGs is well documented
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(84) and merits particular attention in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic (85, 86). While young people remain the most connected population group to digital platforms(87), there is a clear digital divide, as more than 60% of young adults in Africa do not have access to internet (88, 89). Findings of this review show overall high acceptability of e-Health interventions (34, 50), as adolescents highlighted opportunities presented by digital technology, for example by reducing the cost of in-person interaction (53). Yet concerns raised around connectivity issues, lack of access to devices and unintended disclosure of confidential information (53, 73) represent challenges for the acceptability, equitable access and effectiveness of e-Health programs. It is therefore important for intervention providers to assess these challenges early on, and to explore ways of potentially increasing access to devices or technologies within the intervention itself or by supporting concurrent initiatives (65).

Low acceptability of several interventions aimed at increasing contraceptive use and HIV testing also merits particular attention, since HIV transmission and relatively low rates of HIV testing and linkage to antiretroviral therapy (ART) remain a concern among young adults (90, 91). Several studies included in this review highlighted, for example, adolescents' fear of stigma and lack of privacy regarding HIV testing interventions in schools (74), concerns about not being able to properly perform oral HIV testing on their own (76) and conservative views of contraceptive promotion and use (32, 70). These perspectives are likely shaped by inadequate understanding of interventions, but also by social norms surrounding sexuality and contraception within adolescents' homes, schools and communities (92, 93). Also, fear of vaccines and their side effects (94, 95) are important to note and address, in relation not only to HPV prevention, but also to the current Covid-19 vaccine rollout.

All of the above examples highlight the importance of strengthening adolescents' knowledge of interventions and how to interact with them, but also of understanding and engaging with the broader context within which adolescent acceptability is shaped (92). One way to achieve this is to involve adolescents (preferably potential end-users) early in the design and planning phase of the intervention and – if possible - at various stages of the intervention life cycle. Yet, as indicated above, less than half of the studies in this review (42%) assessed prospective acceptability and very few studies involved adolescents in the study design and/or at multiple phases of the intervention. There is clearly potential to allow for more meaningful and consistent adolescent engagement, if young people are to have a stronger role in shaping the development, adaptation and scale up of interventions (20).

A second key approach would be to engage early on and assess acceptability with other stakeholders who are central to an intervention being well-targeted, well-implemented and accepted by adolescents and the broader community. These may include intervention implementers and facilitators, but also caregivers, partners and peers, teachers and community leaders. As noted above, 25 studies in this review also assessed acceptability of other types of stakeholders. Future review analyses and acceptability

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3 studies could further focus on acceptability among these groups of individuals, and its
4 implications for adolescent acceptability and intervention success.
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8 ***Gaps and key areas for future research***

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10 Our review highlights several key gaps and related areas for future intervention
11 acceptability research. First, there appears to be a gap in geographical coverage,
12 particularly in West, Central and North Africa. However, we note that confining our
13 search to English language publications may have excluded some studies from African
14 countries where French is the first language. Given that adolescent needs and
15 preferences are likely to differ across areas with very different social and cultural norms
16 and faith contexts (96), we cannot simply extrapolate acceptability findings to other
17 countries or communities across the continent.
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22 Second, there is clearly scope for more acceptability research in important areas for
23 adolescent development beyond (physical) health and, within the health sector, beyond
24 HIV. As important as reducing HIV transmission and increasing testing and treatment
25 adherence may be in this population (90, 91), they are clearly not the only dimensions of
26 adolescent health and broader wellbeing that merit attention and investment. There is a
27 glaring lack of acceptability studies in areas of adolescent development beyond SDG 3.
28 These include education access and outcomes, employment opportunities, access to
29 water and other services, gender equality and protection from violence, social protection
30 and mental health (97).
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34 The focus on specific types of interventions likely reflects, to a large extent, global health
35 funding and research priorities over the past decades. There has been a considerable
36 amount of international aid dedicated to addressing HIV (98, 99) and particular concern
37 around the acceptability of HIV interventions. Moreover, the concentration of
38 acceptability research in specific countries in Africa is likely a reflection of disparities in
39 independent research infrastructure and capacity across the continent (100, 101). It
40 would also seem that 'acceptability' is a concept and term that has gained traction
41 primarily within the health sector (20). The extension of acceptability research to
42 geographical and developmental areas where it is currently scarce therefore cannot be
43 addressed solely by decisions of individual research teams, but will to some extent
44 require a change in global health and funding priorities, and the 'adoption' of
45 acceptability research by other sectors.
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51 A third gap highlighted by this review is the considerable scope to further conceptualise
52 the construct of acceptability, by more clearly defining it and identifying its key
53 components. Our review reinforced the absence of a clear or standard definition of
54 acceptability, or common tools and indicators. In fact, the large majority of papers
55 included in this review (48) referred to the concept of acceptability without defining it at
56 all, requiring the reader to review the questions and indicators used to gain some
57 understanding of how the construct of acceptability was conceptualised and
58 operationalized. As highlighted by other authors, this lack of common definitions and
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3 frameworks makes the selection of measurement indicators for empirical enquiry in this
4 area more difficult and the comparability of acceptability results challenging (102, 103).
5 There have been recent efforts to address these gaps; in particular, Sekhon and
6 colleagues' theoretical framework for acceptability (TFA), published in 2017 (20), has
7 made a valuable contribution to the scarce conceptual literature in the field. However,
8 there is still much work to be done to apply and test the framework in specific
9 populations. For example, its relevance and completeness in investigating acceptability
10 among adolescents, in less-resourced settings and beyond the (biomedical) health sector
11 is still unclear. Also unclear is the important link between intervention acceptability and
12 uptake, considering that willingness to use the intervention is often included among
13 questions used to assess acceptability (see table S2). Lastly, it is encouraging to note that
14 a relatively large number of studies in our review used mixed methods approaches to
15 assess acceptability; however, there is clearly still scope to employ and combine more
16 innovative methodologies (55, 65).
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24 **Conclusion**

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26 As the first systematic review to aggregate and synthesise a decade of acceptability
27 studies with adolescents in Africa, we believe this study makes a valuable contribution to
28 the African and global literature on acceptability. It highlights the overall high level of
29 acceptability of the interventions assessed, and some of the reasons why adolescents
30 and young adults may or may not find interventions acceptable– both specific to
31 particular types of interventions and common across intervention types.
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35 However, it also exposes considerable scope for future acceptability research and review
36 work, to extend and strengthen the existing body of evidence. This should include:
37 extending acceptability research beyond the health (and particularly HIV) sector and to
38 countries in Africa where this type of research is still scarce; including adolescents and
39 other potential key stakeholders earlier, and potentially throughout, the intervention
40 process; further conceptualising the construct of acceptability; and investigating the
41 relationship between acceptability and intervention uptake and success.
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47 **Data availability statement**

48 Data are available in a public, open-access repository. All data relevant to the study are
49 included in the article or uploaded as supplementary information.
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52 **Ethics statements**

53 **Patient consent for publication**

54 Not required.
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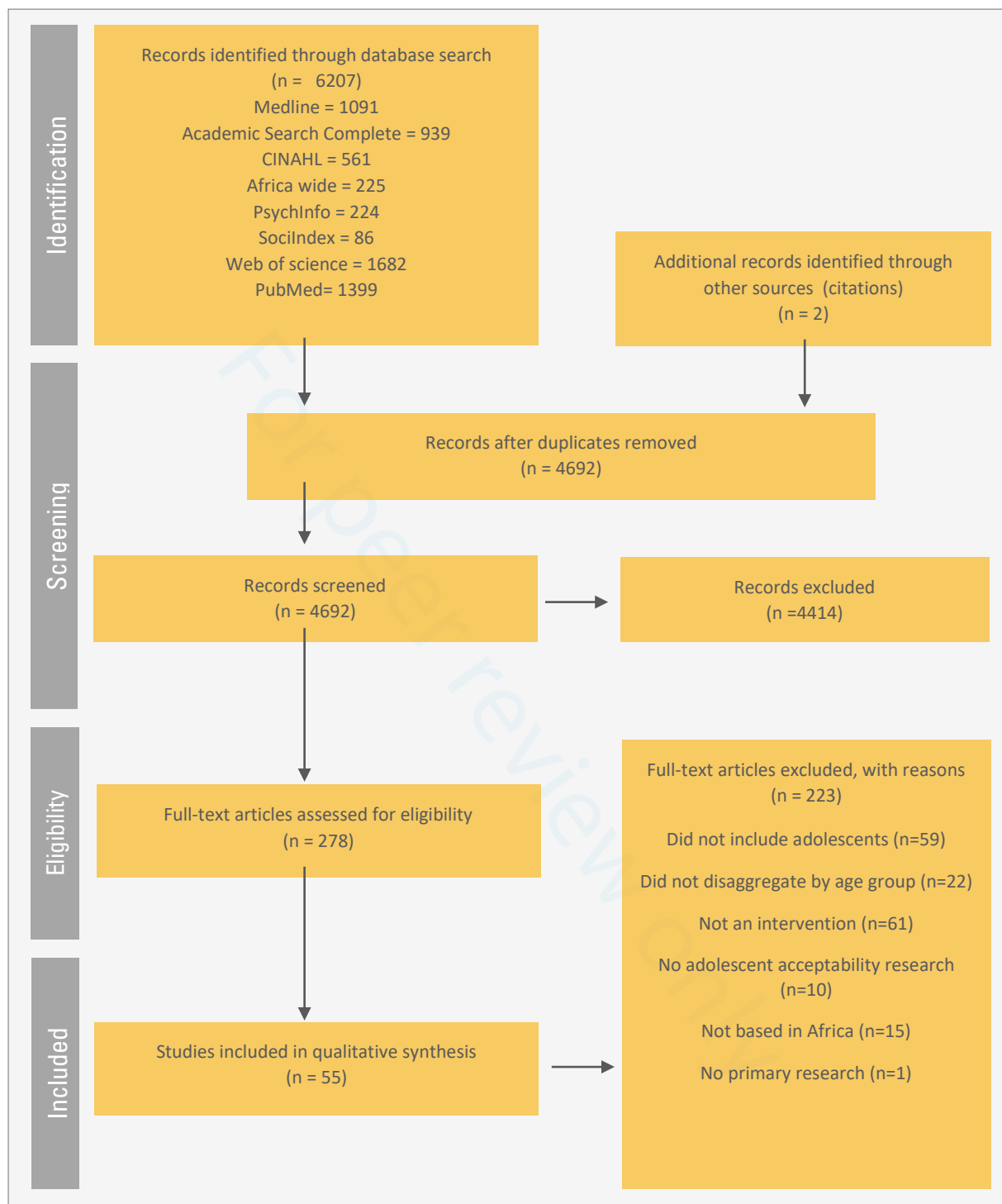


Figure 1: The PRISMA flow diagram describing the process of study selection.

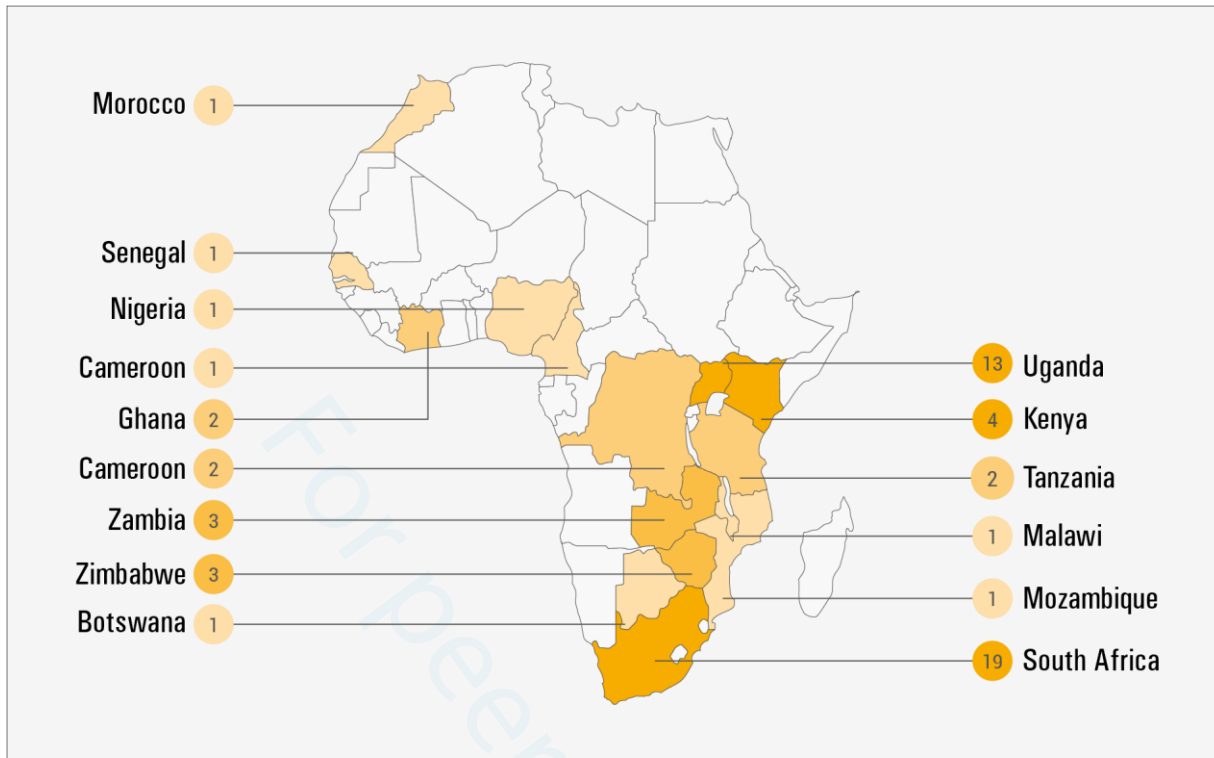


Figure 2: Study Location

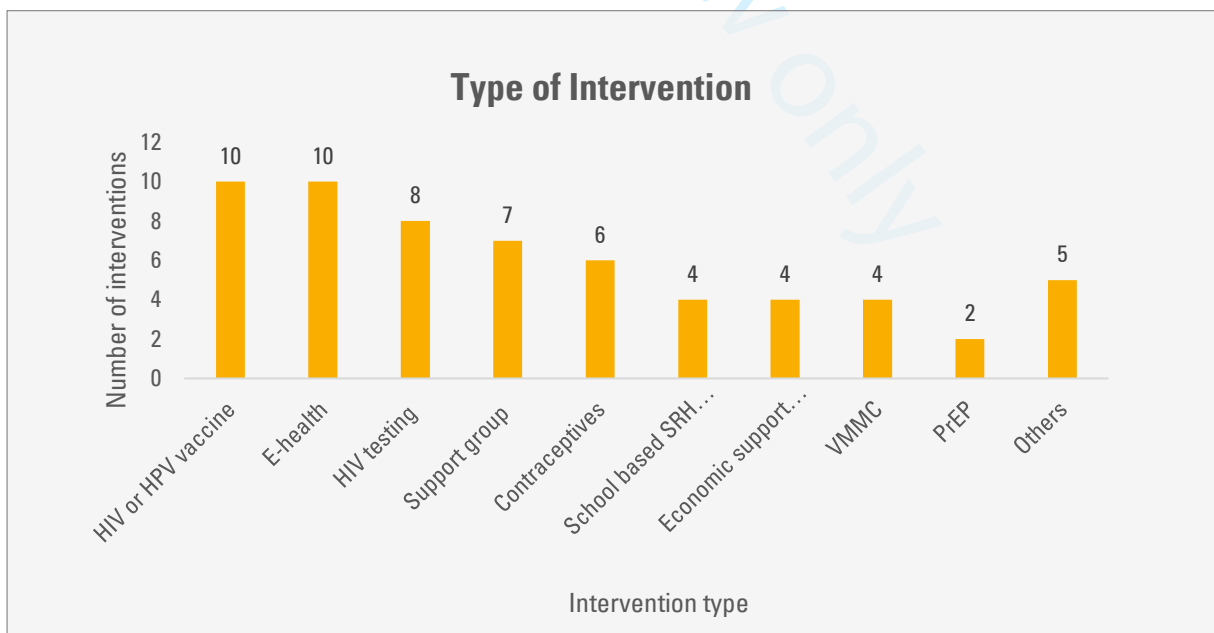


Figure 3: Intervention Types

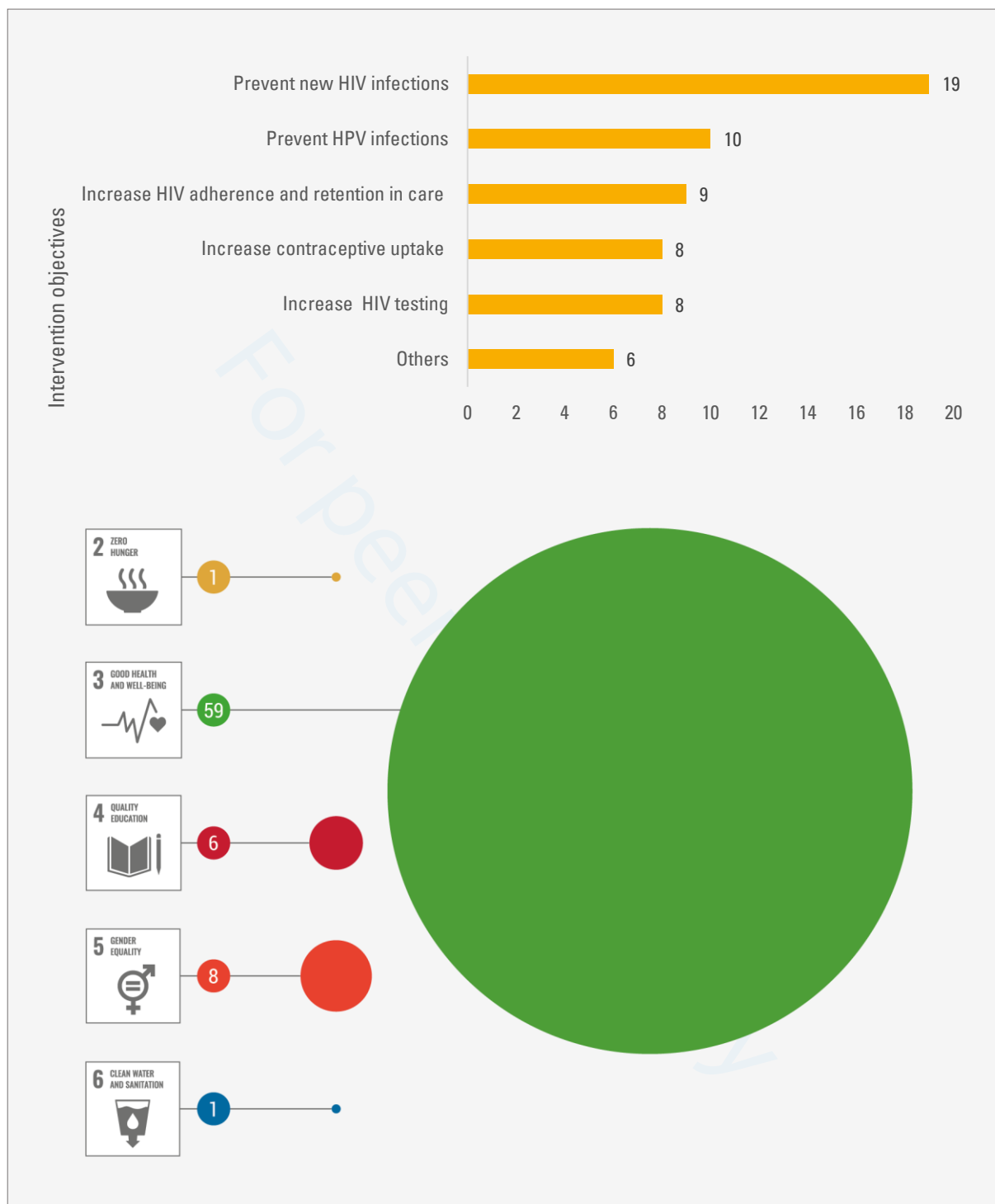


Figure 4: Intervention objectives and number of interventions linked to each SDG

Table S1. Systematic Review Search Strategy

<p>Search criteria (based on the Cochrane Collaboration's PICO criteria)</p>	<p>Population: adolescents or youth 10–24 years, living in Africa</p> <p>Intervention: primary research to determine adolescent and youth acceptability of one or more interventions aimed at improving their developmental outcomes (as per SDG indicators)</p> <p>Comparison: N/A</p> <p>Outcomes: adolescent acceptability findings, including: proportion of adolescents that find an intervention acceptable; information on what adolescents consider acceptable or not; reasons given for acceptability or lack of acceptability</p> <p>Study or intervention design: all types of study designs; no limiters on methodology</p>
<p>Search terms used for PubMed</p>	<p>Adolescents or Youth (((youth[Title/Abstract] OR young person[Title/Abstract] OR young people[Title/Abstract] OR young women[Title/Abstract] OR young men[Title/Abstract] OR child*[Title/Abstract] OR adoles*[Title/Abstract] OR young adult[Title/Abstract] OR teen*[Title/Abstract]))</p> <p>Acceptability ((acceptable[Title/Abstract] OR acceptability[Title/Abstract] OR co-creat*[Title/Abstract] OR adolescent engagement[Title/Abstract] OR youth engagement[Title/Abstract] OR teen* engagement[Title/Abstract] OR participant engagement[Title/Abstract] OR adolescent participation[Title/Abstract] OR youth participation[Title/Abstract] OR teen* participation[Title/Abstract] OR participant input[Title/Abstract] OR adolescent input[Title/Abstract] OR youth input[Title/Abstract] OR teen* input[Title/Abstract] OR participant feedback[Title/Abstract] OR adolescent feedback[Title/Abstract] OR youth feedback[Title/Abstract] OR teen* feedback[Title/Abstract] OR participant consultation[Title/Abstract] OR adolescent consultation[Title/Abstract] OR youth consultation[Title/Abstract] OR teen* consultation[Title/Abstract] OR participant advisory[Title/Abstract] OR adolescent advisory[Title/Abstract] OR youth advisory[Title/Abstract] OR teen* advisory[Title/Abstract] OR participatory research)[Title/Abstract]))</p>

Search terms used for Web of Science	Adolescents of Youth: TOPIC: ((youth OR "young person" OR "young people" OR "young women" OR "young men" OR "child*" OR "adoles*" OR "young adult" OR "teen*")) Acceptability: TOPIC: ((acceptable OR acceptability OR co-creat* OR "adolescent engagement" OR "youth engagement" OR "teen* engagement" OR "participant engagement" OR "adolescent participation" OR "youth participation" OR "teen* participation" OR "participant input" OR "adolescent input" OR "youth input" OR "teen* input" OR "participant feedback" OR "adolescent feedback" OR "youth feedback" OR "teen* feedback" OR "participant consultation" OR "adolescent consultation" OR "youth consultation" OR "teen* consultation" OR "participant advisory" OR "adolescent advisory" OR "youth advisory" OR "teen* advisory" OR "participatory research"))
Search terms for EBSCOhost-linked databases	Adolescents or Youth: AB (youth OR “young person” OR “young people” OR “young women” OR “young men” OR “child*” OR “adoles*” OR “young adult” OR “teen*”) AcceptabilityAB (acceptable OR acceptability OR co-creat* OR “adolescent engagement” OR “youth engagement” OR “teen* engagement” OR “participant engagement” OR “adolescent participation” OR “youth participation” OR “teen* participation” OR “participant input” OR “adolescent input” OR “youth input” OR “teen* input” OR “participant feedback” OR “adolescent feedback” OR “youth feedback” OR “teen* feedback” OR “participant consultation” OR “adolescent consultation” OR “youth consultation” OR “teen* consultation” OR “participant advisory” OR “adolescent advisory” OR “youth advisory” OR “teen* advisory” OR “participatory research”)
Databases searched	Web of Science, Medline, PsychInfo, SocilIndex, CINAHL, Africa-wide, Academic Search Complete and PubMed
Limiters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Published between 1 January 2010 and 30 June 2020 - Peer-reviewed - English language

Authors	Title	Publication year	Country	Setting	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender	Number of intervention sites	Type of intervention	Type of intervention (sub-type)	Key objective of intervention	SDGs	Progressive, consistent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Method used	Indicators and questions	Overall acceptability	Subdomains that formed the overall acceptability	Other subdomains for whom acceptability was assessed	
Angeles et al	Contexts of vulnerability and the socialised	2018	South Africa	Peri-urban	14	19-17	Female & Male	4	HIV Vaccine, Contraception	HIV Vaccine, Vax	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs and FGDs	FGDs and CB interview series	High	NA	Healthcare Workers	
Ayala et al	Acceptability and usability of the 2018	2019	Cameroon	Rural	101	14-19	Female	1	HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To increase HPV use	3	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey	Survey included quantitative	High	NA	NA	
Barber et al	Acceptability of an economic support cost	2019	Zambia	Rural	95	NA	Female & Male	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1, 4 & 5	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and IDIs	FGDs and IDIs	High	NA	Community gate keepers	
Barber et al	Initial willingness to accept cost for an	2019	Chad	Not stated	10	15-19	Female & Male	1	Support group	Support group	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	Survey structured FGDs	High	NA	NA	
Bell et al	Cost-Sensitive Usability of Healthcare	2019	Uganda	Urban	15	NA	Female & Male	1	Healthcare	Incentive Based	To increase service use	1 & 4	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	FGDs covered acceptability of	High	NA	NA	
Buato et al	Acceptability of short-term resources to	2016	Zimbabwe	Rural & Urban	14	19-19	Female & Male	1	Others	Home Based Care	To increase service use	1	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs	Focus group included acceptability	High	NA	Program managers and providers	
Carver et al	Acceptability and feasibility of a brief	2018	South Africa	Not stated	30	19-17	Female & Male	1	Others	Substance use	To reduce use of	3	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs	No question stated and not	High	NA	Caregivers	
Chakraborty et al	Acceptability of a mobile health	2018	South Africa	Not stated	100	19-19	Female & Male	1	Others	SMS based	To increase service use	3	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	Survey	Survey included structured	High	NA	NA	
Chowdhury et al	Acceptability of youth health	2019	Zambia	Rural	58	19-18	Female & Male	1	School based sexual and	School based sex	To increase service use	1 & 5	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	Structural FGD middle class	High	NA	Teachers	
Cover et al	Acceptability of contraceptive	2017	Uganda	Rural & Urban	60	19-19	Female	1	Contraception	Contraception	To increase service use	3 & 5	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs	ICD structured interview	High	NA	NA	
Dahl et al	Acceptability of Contraception	2019	Nigeria	Not stated	349	19-18	Female & Male	1	Support group	Support group	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs through Fac	Structural FGD middle class	High	NA	NA	
Davies et al	Acceptability of condom	2019	Zimbabwe	Rural	157	19-19	Female & Male	1	Contraception	Condoms	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	Survey/Qualitative	Survey asked whether used	High	NA	Family members	
Ferreira et al	Perceptions of Risk of Venereal	2019	Zimbabwe	Urban	20	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	Provider-initiated	To increase service use	3	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	Survey/Qualitative	Survey covered acceptability	High	NA	NA	
Ford et al	Acceptability of a mobile health	2019	South Africa	Urban	30	19-19	Female & Male	1	Others	HPV Vaccine	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Mixed methods	Survey/Qualitative	Survey questions included on	High	NA	Clinical service providers	
Hickling et al	"This one has serious" interventions for	2019	South Africa	Urban	30	19-19	Female & Male	1	Contraception	Contraception	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	Survey/Qualitative	Survey covered acceptability	High	NA	Teachers	
Hocher et al	Acceptability and performance of	2019	South Africa	Rural	206	19-18	Female & Male	1	HPV testing	Self-testing	To increase service use	3	Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Post-test questionnaire capture	High	NA	NA	
Horowitz et al	Acceptability, Perceptions and	2019	Uganda	Urban, semi-urban	20	19-18	Female & Male	1	School based sexual and	School based sex	To increase service use	1 & 5	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	Survey/Qualitative	Survey included acceptability	High	NA	Teachers	
Howe et al	Human Papillomavirus Vaccination	2019	South Africa	Not stated	400	19-18	Female & Male	1	Support group	Support group	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs	No clear acceptability question	High	NA	NA	
Jayasinghe et al	Acceptability of male circumcision	2019	Botswana	Not stated	269	19-18	Male	1	Other biomedical HPV	VMMs	To increase service use	1	Prospective & NA	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Structured questionnaire	High	NA	Parents/guardians	
Kamukama et al	Acceptability of HPV vaccine	2019	Uganda	Urban	20	19-19	Female & Male	1	School based sexual and	School based sex	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and IDIs	Specific acceptability question	High	NA	Teachers and parents	
Katumba et al	Acceptability of HPV vaccine	2019	South Africa	Urban	20	19-19	Female & Male	1	HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To increase service use	1	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	FGDs explored reasons for	High	NA	NA	
Khalid et al	A Qualitative Analysis of Factors	2019	South Africa	Urban	20	19-19	Female & Male	1	HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To increase service use	1	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs	Interviews covered contextual	High	NA	Caregivers	
Khan, Zaki and Shuman	Acceptability and feasibility of a school	2019	South Africa	Rural	68	19-19	Female	1	Contraception	School based sex	To increase service use	1 & 5	Prospective	NA	NA	Sociodemographic	Qualitative	FGDs	FGD topic guide asked how use	Low	NA	Parents
Khuzwayo et al	Acceptability of a mobile health	2018	South Africa	Urban	40	19-19	Female & Male	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	ICDs	Interviews focused on topics	High	NA	NA	
Kidwell et al	Acceptability of a Pilot Intervention	2018	Kenya	Not stated	16	19-14	Male	1	Other biomedical HPV	VMMs	To increase service use	1	Retrospective	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and Survey	The questionnaire covered	High	NA	Community leaders	
Kiproti et al	"This is the medicine" A Review	2019	Kenya	Semi-urban	51	18-24	Female & Male	1	Support group	Support group	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	FGDs explored acceptability	High	NA	NA	
Kuo et al	Acceptability, Feasibility, and	2019	South Africa	Urban	71	19-15	Female & Male	1	Support group	Support group	To reduce HIV risk	3	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	Focus groups	Participants asked intervention	High	NA	Parents	
Kuznetsov et al	Acceptability, Feasibility, and	2019	South Africa	Urban	24	19-14	Female & Male	1	Support group	Support group	To increase health	3	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	FGDs explored acceptability	High	NA	Community leaders	
Ladell et al	A Randomised controlled trial of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Madhavi et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2017	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included a	High	NA	NA	
Maheshwari et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	Zimbabwe	Not stated	468	19-17	Male	1	Other biomedical HPV	VMMs	To increase service use	1	Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire	High	NA	NA	
Milum et al	Knowledge of Cervical Cancer	2019	Uganda	Not stated	108	18-18	Female & Male	1	HPV Vaccine, Cervical cancer	HPV Vaccine	To increase HPV use	3	Prospective & NA	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire	High	NA	NA	
Mitsuru et al	Cell phone usage among adolescents	2019	Uganda	Not stated	200	19-19	Female & Male	1	Others	SMS based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	Survey/Qualitative	Survey included acceptability	High	NA	NA	
Nawar et al	Adherence to non-sterile	2019	Senegal	Not stated	80	18-18	Female & Male	1	Others	Nutrition/HPV	To reduce maternal	3	Consentive	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and survey	The structured questionnaire	High	NA	Caregivers	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	14	18-14	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	Survey/Qualitative	Survey assessed willingness	High	NA	NA	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural	29	18-17	Female	1	Economic support intervention	Cash transfers	To increase service use	1	Consentive	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered whether started	High	NA	Providers, coordinators, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordinators	
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Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
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Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of	2019	South Africa	Rural & Urban	214	19-19	Female & Male	1	HIV testing	School based	To increase service use	1	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey/Qualitative	Questionnaire included	High	NA	Facilitators	
Ndlovu et al	Acceptability and feasibility of																					



PRISMA 2020 Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Pg. 1
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist.	Pg. 2
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	Pg. 5
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	Pg. 5
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	Pg. 5,6
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	Pg. 6
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	Table S1
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pg. 6
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pg. 6
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	NA
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	NA
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	NA
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	NA
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	Pg. 6
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	NA
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	NA
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	NA
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	NA
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	NA
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	NA
Certainty	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	NA



PRISMA 2020 Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
assessment			
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	Pg. 6
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	NA
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	Pg. 7
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	NA
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	NA
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	NA
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	NA
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	NA
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	NA
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	NA
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	NA
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	Pg. 11
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	Pg. 13
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	Pg. 13
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	Pg. 13-14
OTHER INFORMATION			
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	Pg. 15
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	Pg. 15
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	NA

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A decade of research into the acceptability of interventions aimed at improving adolescent and youth health and social outcomes in Africa: a systematic review and evidence map

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A decade of research into the acceptability of interventions aimed at improving adolescent and youth health and social outcomes in Africa: a systematic review and evidence map

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Abstract

Objective

Interventions aimed at improving adolescent health and social outcomes are more likely to be successful if the young people they target find them acceptable. However, no standard definitions or indicators exist to assess acceptability, acceptability research with adolescents in LMICs is still limited, and no known reviews synthesise the evidence from Africa. This paper maps and qualitatively synthesizes the scope, characteristics, and findings of these studies, including definitions of acceptability, methods used, the type and objectives of interventions assessed, and overall findings on adolescent acceptability.

Design

We conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed studies assessing intervention acceptability with young adults (aged 10-24) in Africa, published between January 2010 and June 2020.

Data sources

Web of Science, Medline, PsychInfo, SociIndex, CINAHL, Africa-wide, Academic Search Complete and PubMed were searched through July 2020

Eligibility criteria for selecting studies

Papers were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: if they (i) reported primary research assessing acceptability (based on the authors' definition of the study or findings) of one or more intervention(s) with adolescents and young adults 10-24; (ii) assessed acceptability of intervention(s) aimed at positively influencing one or more development outcome(s), as defined by SDG indicators; (iii) reported on research conducted in Africa; (iv) were in the English Language; (v) were peer-reviewed and; (vi) were published between 1st January 2010 and 30th June 2020.

Data extraction and synthesis

Abstracts were reviewed independently by the two first authors to determine relevance. Full text of potentially eligible studies were retrieved and independently examined by the same two authors; areas of disagreement or lack of clarity were resolved through discussion by the two authors and – where necessary – the assessment of a third author.

Results

55 studies were considered eligible for inclusion in the review. Most studies were conducted in Southern Africa, of which 32 jointly in South Africa and Uganda. The majority of interventions assessed for acceptability could be classified as HIV or HPV vaccine interventions (10), E-health (10), HIV testing interventions (8), support group interventions (7) and contraceptive interventions (6). The objectives of most interventions were linked to SDG3, specifically to HIV and sexual and reproductive health. Acceptability was overall high among these published studies. 22 studies provided reasons for acceptability or lack

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3 thereof, some specific to particular types of interventions and others common across
4 intervention types.
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6 **Conclusions**

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8 Our review exposes considerable scope for future acceptability research and review work.
9 This should include extending acceptability research beyond the health (and particularly
10 HIV) sector and to regions in Africa where this type of research is still scarce; including
11 adolescents earlier, and potentially throughout the intervention process; further
12 conceptualising the construct of acceptability among adolescents and beyond; and
13 examining the relationship between acceptability and uptake.
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19 **Key words: acceptability; adolescents; youth; interventions; Africa**

20 **Strengths and limitations of this study**

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 - This systematic review was carried out in line with the Preferred Reporting Items
26 for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)
 - Our search strategy and composite search strings were sufficiently broad in
27 scope to include studies assessing all types of interventions aimed at improving
28 health and other social outcomes among adolescents and youth in Africa
 - Screening of study abstracts and full text, as well as data extraction, were
29 conducted independently by at least 2 authors
 - Our review did not include studies conducted before 2010.
 - The review did not include a quality assessment given the diversity of study
30 designs, though we note this is not a prerequisite for a mapping review

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Introduction

Addressing the developmental needs of adolescents and youth in African countries is critical if the continent is to achieve its sustainable development goals (SDGs), and envisaged transformation articulated in the African Union's overarching Agenda 2063 (1, 2). Adolescents make up the largest generation of their age group in history (3), and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) accounts for over 20% of the estimated 1.8 billion adolescents and young adults globally (4). Investing in adolescent wellbeing can have positive effects for individuals during adolescence and beyond, as well as potential positive societal effects. Interventions that reduce the consequences of poverty among adolescents, or lead to more positive behaviours, can influence development and wellbeing during adolescence and throughout the life course (5-7). Investment during adolescence can strengthen early childhood investments and reduce the burden of morbidity and mortality in adulthood (8). Moreover, it has been argued that investment in adolescents can help realize the 'demographic dividend' (9, 10), and reduce generational inequalities (11).

Substantial investment has been made globally in adolescent interventions. These have focused on areas such as sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, uptake of vaccines and prevention of substance abuse (12). Unfortunately these interventions have not always recorded impressive impact (13). Data from both high-income countries (HICs) and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) reveal that many interventions focusing on adolescents are fragmented, poorly designed, and unequal in quality (14). One reason for this may be an insufficient understanding of the particular nature of adolescence (15).

Adolescence is a critical period characterised by rapid development of the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional capabilities that are instrumental across their life-course (3). Adolescence is also a time of gathering independence. Pathways to learning and experiencing such independence are varied, with experiential learning playing a key role. The rapid growth associated with this phase and its influences on behaviour need to be well understood in order to design timely and effective interventions (16).

Interventions may also fail to sufficiently consider the diverse environments in which adolescents live, that may shape their decisions and behaviour (17). This could lead to interveners missing important factors that, if unaddressed, will prevent the intervention from having the desired impact. Additionally, program implementers may lack the specialized skills necessary for delivering and sustaining these interventions (12). Adult interventions may not translate directly for adolescent audiences and programme adjustments may be inadequate.

Since most interventions seek to effect adolescent behavioural change, many of the obstacles to uptake and effectiveness could be addressed by affording sufficient importance to the perspectives and participation of adolescents themselves. When adolescents feel coerced to engage in a particular behaviour or accept interventions that they don't identify with, they are more likely to resist the message of the proposed intervention, or to stop participating altogether (18). Instead, interventions that are

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3 acceptable to adolescent end-users are likely to have higher social validity (19), uptake
4 and effectiveness (20, 21).
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7 However, adolescent involvement and input in intervention design has been varied, and
8 models of adolescent inclusion have been poorly envisaged and implemented. There is
9 still a relatively low number of acceptability studies among adolescents in LMICs and
10 specifically in Africa, particularly beyond the health sector (19, 20). To our knowledge no
11 existing reviews comprehensively map the extant body of acceptability research in Africa
12 and aggregate the evidence emerging from these studies. Furthermore, there is no clear
13 and standard definition of acceptability (20) in Africa and beyond. This in turn raises
14 several methodological challenges when setting out to assess acceptability, including the
15 choice of measurement frameworks and tools (20). It also highlights the scope for
16 further conceptualisation of this construct, particularly in specific populations and
17 geographical regions.
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21 We conducted a systematic review to identify studies that conducted primary research
22 with adolescents and young adults (10-24) in Africa over the past decade (January 2010-
23 June 2020), to assess the acceptability of interventions aimed at positively influencing
24 their developmental outcomes. This paper maps and qualitatively synthesizes the scope,
25 characteristics, and overall findings of studies identified. This includes evidence
26 addressing the questions of whether and how the construct of acceptability is
27 conceptualised and defined within these studies, the methods and indicators used, the
28 type and key objectives of interventions assessed, as well as evidence on what
29 adolescents find acceptable and why. Based on these findings, we aim to discuss
30 implications for future adolescent-focused interventions in Africa and identify gaps for
31 future acceptability research with this population.
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39 **Methods**

40 **Search strategy**

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42 The systematic review was carried out in line with the Preferred Reporting Items for
43 Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). We used the PICO (Population,
44 Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) criteria (22) to help determine eligibility criteria for
45 inclusion develop the search strategy and composite search terms developed (see Table
46 S1). We searched 8 online databases (listed in Table S1), covering a wide range of
47 behavioural science research, and searched the reference lists of eligible papers.
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53 **Study selection and data extraction**

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55 Papers were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: if they (i) reported
56 primary research assessing acceptability (based on the authors' definition of the study or
57 findings) of one or more intervention(s) with adolescents and young adults 10-24; (ii)
58 assessed acceptability of intervention(s) aimed at positively influencing one or more
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3 development outcome(s), as defined by SDG indicators; (iii) reported on research
4 conducted in Africa; (iv) were in the English Language; (v) were peer-reviewed and; (vi)
5 were published between 1st January 2010 and 30th June 2020. We restricted our review to
6 a 10-year period, taking into account the available researcher time and other available
7 resources to conduct this review, and its relatively broad scope in terms of types of
8 interventions and developmental outcomes included. We did not include limiters for
9 study design or methodological tools, type of intervention or sector, or type of
10 developmental outcome the intervention intended to influence. To be as inclusive as
11 possible, we included studies that worked with broader samples (e.g., youth and adults)
12 but disaggregated the results and reported findings specifically for the age group of
13 interest (10-24). We imported all references from the online databases into Endnote,
14 where duplicates were identified and removed. Abstracts were reviewed independently
15 by the two first authors (ODS and MC) to determine relevance. Full text of potentially
16 eligible studies were retrieved and independently examined by the same two authors;
17 areas of disagreement or lack of clarity were resolved through discussion by the two
18 authors and – where necessary – the assessment of a third author (GH). Reasons for
19 exclusion of each paper not deemed eligible were recorded in an excel spread sheet. We
20 developed a detailed extraction sheet, using Excel software, to extract key
21 characteristics and findings of eligible papers. For reliability, the information for each
22 paper was extracted separately by at least two of the first three authors and differences
23 were resolved through discussion among the authors.

31 **Patient and public involvement**

32 Patients and the public were not involved in the preparation of this study.

33 **Results**

34 ***Eligible studies included in the review***

35 Figure 1 presents the PRISMA flow diagram describing the process of study selection and
36 reasons for study exclusion. A total of 4692 titles and abstracts were screened after
37 removing duplicates, 278 articles were subjected to a full-text review, and a final 55
38 studies were considered eligible for inclusion in the review.

39 **Figure 1 here:**

40 ***Study characteristics: publication year, location and sample***

41 Below we present a summary of key characteristics of the 55 eligible studies included in
42 our review. More than half of the papers were published between 2018-2020 with 22% of
43 the papers published in 2019, as shown in the supplementary figure S1.

44 Fig.2 below provides a visual representation of the location of studies on the continent.
45 There is a clear concentration of acceptability studies in South and East Africa, with
46 approximately half of identified studies conducted in South Africa (19) and Uganda (13).
47 Only seven studies were from West and Central Africa and only one from North Africa.

48 **Figure 2 here:**

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3 The supplementary table S2 provides information on study characteristics and overall
4 findings for the entire list of eligible studies, and by each type of intervention category
5 (as indicated below) in separate sheets. Most study samples included male and female
6 participants, while 11 studies worked only with females and three with males only. 44
7 studies worked with samples that fell entirely within the specified age range (10-24),
8 while 11 included studies worked with broader samples (e.g., youth and adults) but
9 disaggregated the results and reported findings specifically for the age group of interest.
10 To be as inclusive as possible, we included 10 studies that did not clearly specify the exact
11 age range of participants, but for which available information indicated that the sample
12 would have been entirely or almost entirely within this range (e.g. secondary school and
13 university students (23-28) or where sample descriptive data indicated a sample
14 consisting almost entirely of participants 24 or younger (29-31).

15
16 While our inclusion criteria focused on primary acceptability research with adolescents
17 and young adults, it should be noted that 25 studies also collected acceptability data
18 from other stakeholders. These include caregivers or other family members (32-40),
19 teachers, facilitators (26, 41, 42), community leaders or gate keepers, (28, 43), peer
20 mentors, service providers and healthcare workers (44-51). Since the focus of this
21 mapping review is the acceptability of young adults specifically, we do not synthesise or
22 report on perspectives of other stakeholders.

23 24 25 ***Types and objectives of interventions assessed for acceptability.***

26 We categorised interventions assessed for acceptability both by type of intervention,
27 based on their key components (see Figure 3), and stated objectives of the interventions
28 (see Figure 4). In terms of type of intervention, interventions were classified as HIV or
29 HPV vaccine interventions (10), E-health (10), HIV testing interventions (8), support group
30 interventions (7), contraceptive interventions (6), voluntary medical male circumcision
31 programs (VMMC) (4), school-based sexual and reproductive health education (4),
32 economic support programs (4) and pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) (2). Five studies did
33 not fit into the above intervention categories and were grouped as 'other'; they
34 consisted respectively of nutritional therapy, a psychosocial - home based care
35 intervention, a counselling support intervention to address substance abuse, cervical
36 cancer screening and a rectal microbicide intervention for HIV prevention. It should be
37 noted that two of the studies reviewed assessed more than one intervention (45, 52) (3
38 and 4 respectively). The total number of interventions assessed for acceptability was
39 therefore 60.

40 41 42 **Figure 3 here:**

43 More detail on intervention sub-types is included in Table S2. For example, E-health
44 interventions included game based (1), SMS based (7) and internet-based (2) programs.
45 All 7 support group interventions provided psychosocial or educational support related
46 to HIV, and 5 worked only with young adults living with HIV. One group intervention was
47 delivered through both a social media platform and in-person meetings (53), one was a
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3 family based support intervention with adolescent-parent dyads (33), four were linked to
4 public healthcare facilities (42, 47, 54, 55) and one was a community intervention (43).

6 The primary objectives of most interventions were focused on HIV- or sexual and
7 reproductive health-related outcomes (see Figure 4): 19 primarily aimed to prevent new
8 HIV infections, ten to prevent HPV infection, nine to increase HIV treatment adherence
9 and retention in care, eight to increase the uptake of HIV testing, eight aimed at
10 increasing contraceptive uptake and reducing early childbearing and six provided
11 psychosocial support for adolescents living with HIV.

15 The objectives of almost all interventions were therefore linked to indicators within SDG3
16 (ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being). However, one study could also be
17 linked to SDG2 (food security and improved nutrition), 6 to SDG4 (inclusive and equitable
18 quality education), 8 to SDG5 (gender equality) and 1 to SDG6 (access to water and
19 sanitation).

22 **Figure 4 here:**

24 ***Definitions and conceptual frameworks for acceptability***

26 Only seven of the 55 reviewed studies provided an explicit definition of acceptability and
27 only six used a conceptual framework (as indicated in Table S2). Three definitions
28 focused on the preference for or willingness to use the intervention: Tonen-Wolyec et al
29 (2019) defined acceptability as consenting to and using the (HIV self-testing)
30 intervention; Smith, Wallace (30) defined it as the preference for using the (HIV self-
31 testing) device; and Katahoire et al (2013) defined acceptability as the willingness or
32 reluctance to use and complete the intervention (in this case the 3 doses of HPV vaccine)
33 (56).

37 Two definitions focused mainly on responses to the intervention. MacCarthy et al (2020)
38 (48) referred to a definition and framework developed by Sekhon et al (2017)(20) and
39 defined acceptability as the cognitive and emotional responses to an intervention (20,
40 48). Parker et al (2013) (42) defined acceptability as how the intended individual
41 recipients react to a program, guided by the Bowen feasibility framework (57). A further
42 two studies conceptualized acceptability as an implementation outcome and focused on
43 value, appeal and likeability: Kibel et al (2019)(58) referred to the perception among
44 stakeholders that a certain element of the program was valued, agreeable, or
45 satisfactory, while Sabben et al (2019)(34) defined acceptability as appeal, relevance,
46 value, usability, and understandability, based on the Technology Acceptance Model's
47 (TAM) framework (59).

52 Three studies referred to a conceptual framework but did not provide an explicit
53 definition of acceptability. In their assessment of individual and environmental barriers
54 and facilitators related to use of a school-based contraception clinic, Khoza et al (2019)
55 referred to the social ecological framework (60). Sayles et al's (2010) study was guided
56 by value-expectancy and social marketing theories (61); the authors investigated vaccine
57 attitudes, normative vaccine beliefs, and perceived risk and severity of HIV as
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determinants of HIV vaccine uptake. Turiho et al's (2017) study used the symbolic interactionism theory (62) and some aspects of the Health Beliefs Model (HBM) to explain how community members' perceptions and their interaction shape vaccine acceptability.

Study design, methods and indicators

Sixteen studies included in this review (29%) assessed 'anticipated' or prospective acceptability among adolescents who had not (yet) received the intervention (20). 18 studies (33%) assessed acceptability concurrently, during the delivery of the intervention, while 14 (25%) assessed acceptability post-intervention, retrospectively. The remaining seven (13%) of the studies assessed interventions prospectively and retrospectively; among these, two studies worked with separate groups of adolescents who had received and not yet received the intervention (52, 63), while the remaining 5 interviewed adolescents at two different stages of the intervention (40, 44, 55, 64, 65). Five studies involved adolescents in the study design (43, 50, 53, 55, 65).

20 studies described their methodology as solely qualitative, 18 as quantitative and 17 as mixed methods. 11 of the qualitative studies used only focus group discussions (FGDS), 7 used only in-depth interviews (IDIs) and 2 used both methods. Most of the quantitative studies (15) employed structured survey questionnaires. The mixed methods studies combined FGDs or IDIs with survey questionnaires, online surveys and evaluation reports.

As detailed in the supplementary table S2, a wide range of questions and indicators were used to measure acceptability. None of the studies used a standardized previously validated instrument, although two papers drew from existing instruments (66, 67). The majority of questions asked across studies covered participants' overall perceptions and experience of the intervention, willingness to use the intervention, understanding of the intervention, barriers and facilitators of access and use, the perceived effectiveness of the intervention and willingness to recommend or distribute it to others.

Acceptability findings

Overall, acceptability of interventions assessed was high. Of the 55 studies, 30 assessed acceptability quantitatively and reported on the proportion of young adults in the sample that found the intervention acceptable. While some studies quantified acceptability through a single percentage, based on one question or indicator, a number of studies reported a range, based on multiple questions or indicators. One of the reviewed studies reported 100% acceptability (33), while acceptability ranged from 64% - 100% in 25 studies and 46% - 61% in 2 studies (27, 52, 68, 69). Only two studies clearly reported acceptability below 50%: at 37% for a contraceptive intervention in Tanzania (70) and 27% for an HPV vaccine study in Morocco (71). Reasons given for low acceptability of the contraceptive intervention were that adolescents and their peers were too young to be sensitized about condoms, that condoms would not be used properly and that using contraception was a sin (70). Reasons were not provided by adolescents for the Moroccan study;

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3 however, in quantitative analysis, older age, female gender, studying at a public (versus
4 private) school and lower educational attainment were associated with lower odds of
5 acceptability for the HPV vaccine (71).
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8 The remaining 25 studies did not quantify acceptability. However, the authors of two of
9 these studies reported that adolescents found the interventions to be unacceptable,
10 based on their overall findings. One study in South Africa assessed contraceptive
11 interventions (32); a key reason for low acceptability was the belief that a school-based
12 contraceptive clinic (SBCC) could promote promiscuity by sending a message that
13 'teenage sex was acceptable' and making contraceptives easily accessible (32). The
14 second study assessed a psychosocial home based care intervention in Tanzania (72),
15 which adolescent participants felt did not align well with their expectations. They
16 believed the intervention to be more relevant to their caregivers and were disappointed
17 in the lack of financial support in a context of widespread poverty (72).
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21 Findings of the remaining 51 studies overall indicated high levels of acceptability. Some of
22 these studies also provided various reasons as to why adolescents found the
23 interventions acceptable (n=22) or (for a minority of adolescents) not acceptable (n=20).
24 These are presented in Table 1, by type of intervention, for studies with both low and
25 high overall acceptability. The main reasons e-Health interventions were acceptable to
26 adolescents were: knowledge gained from the intervention regarding their sexual health
27 (34, 65), the privacy these interventions provided (23, 48) and knowing how to make use
28 of the intervention (25, 34). Adolescents who instead did not find these interventions
29 acceptable felt that the content was not culturally appropriate (23, 25, 65), highlighted
30 technological glitches (48, 65) or were concerned with inclusiveness where, for example,
31 not all the young adults had access to a necessary device or risked unintended disclosure
32 of private information when sharing devices (65, 73).
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38 Confidentiality, appropriateness, privacy, and decision-making autonomy were among
39 the reasons adolescents found HIV testing interventions (including self-testing and
40 testing in schools) acceptable (44, 64, 74). Fear of the procedure, concerns with the cost
41 and validity of the test, and inadequate emotional support were reasons given for lack of
42 acceptability (64, 75, 76). Support group interventions were considered acceptable
43 because of the emotional support provided and because young adults found the groups
44 to be empowering and were able to discuss HIV-related issues in a stigma-free
45 environment (42, 47, 53, 55).
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49 Knowledge was a key reason for high vaccine acceptability for both HPV and HIV vaccine
50 interventions. For example, adolescents' understanding that HPV vaccines could prevent
51 cervical cancer and HIV made them more likely to accept the interventions (63).
52 Conversely, lack of knowledge or understanding of the intervention was linked to low
53 acceptability (36, 52, 56). Other reasons given for acceptability were greater female
54 autonomy and agency to protect themselves, in the event of sexual violence or
55 transactional sex, and encouragement of peers (36, 63). On the other hand, perceived
56 cost, myths and distrust of vaccine providers, and fear of side effects, were themes
57 raised to explain low acceptability (61, 77).
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Reasons for acceptability of economic support interventions included financial autonomy (78) and the freedom to decide how to use cash transfers (28). However, concerns around the process of selecting which individuals or households were to receive transfers, as well as inclusion, sustainability and effects on social relations and social equity within the community (38, 78), were factors that threatened acceptability.

Table 1: Reasons provided by adolescents for acceptability and unacceptability of interventions, by type of intervention.

Type of intervention	Reasons given for acceptability	Reasons given for unacceptability
eHealth	<p>Knowledge provided on sexual health and HIV (25, 34)</p> <p>Privacy (23, 48)</p> <p>Increased self-efficacy to manage risky situations(34)</p> <p>Ease of use (34)</p> <p>Supportive mentors (29)</p> <p>Freedom to talk openly to mentors about HIV status and disclosure (29)</p>	<p>Visual content considered not culturally appropriate (23)</p> <p>Conservative views about certain topics discussed (e.g., oral sex) (25, 65)</p> <p>Concerns around access and inclusiveness, as not all youth owned devices (65, 73)</p> <p>Fear of accidental disclosure of confidential information through device-sharing (73)</p> <p>Technical glitches with devices (48, 65)</p>
Vaccines	<p>Protection from HPV in the case of sexual abuse or transactional sex (36)</p> <p>Protection from HIV infection when the transmission risk is out of an individual's control (45, 61)</p> <p>Desire to have unprotected sex for child-bearing (women on HIV-vaccine) (61)</p> <p>Being able to have unprotected sex and multiple sexual partners (male adolescents on HIV vaccine)(61)</p> <p>Protection in serodiscordant relationships while avoiding the HIV stigma and costs related to buying condoms (male adolescents on HIV vaccine) (45)</p>	<p>Distrust of government and scientists (61)</p> <p>Association of vaccine uptake with promiscuity (61)</p> <p>Fear of HIV testing and HIV stigma (61)</p> <p>Cost of vaccine (61)</p> <p>Fear of vaccine side effects (51, 61, 63, 77)</p> <p>Fear of injection (77)</p> <p>Lack of knowledge about vaccine and cervical cancer (36, 52, 56)</p>
HIV testing	<p>Confidentiality of HIV self-testing at schools (44, 76) (74)</p> <p>Ease of use of HIV self-test (44, 76)</p> <p>Fast results of self-test(44)</p> <p>Ability to test independently with self-test (64)</p> <p>Opportunity to know HIV status, for peace of mind and to plan for the future (provider-initiated testing) (39)</p> <p>Lower waiting time, less distance to facility, and friendlier staff at mobile (versus 'conventional') clinic(67)</p>	<p>Concern with validity of HIVST self-test kit results (64, 76)</p> <p>Costs of HIV test kit (64)</p> <p>Lack of emotional support with self-test(64, 76)</p> <p>Fear of the procedure (finger prick) (30, 75)</p> <p>Belief that school is not the right place for HIV testing (74)</p> <p>Lack of privacy and risk of stigma through school testing (74)</p>
Support group	<p>Emotional and social support provided (42, 47, 53, 55)</p> <p>Knowledge and skills provided (42, 55)</p> <p>Enjoyed participating (53)</p>	

	Stigma free environment (54) Confidential space to openly discuss sexual health and behavior (42, 53) Greater decision-making autonomy to negotiate safer sexual relationships (42)	
SRH education	Increased knowledge on sexual and reproductive health (24, 41) Supportive teachers at youth clubs (41) Girls more comfortable attending school during menstruation (24)	Conservative views about certain topics discussed (linked to sexual intercourse) (41)
VMMC	Material support provided during the intervention (e.g. food, shelter and security) (58) Knowledge gained through participation (58)	Penile swelling after removal and transient discoloration of inner foreskin (79)
Economic support	Increased school retention (28, 38, 78) Financial autonomy (28, 78) Easy access to cash transfer (28)	Concerns with sustainability and impact of transfer termination (78) Exclusion of certain households or individuals in the community from receiving transfers (28, 38) Perception that selection process was unfair (38) Lack of interest in family planning services accessible through (conditional) benefit cards (80)
Contraception	Ease of use of self-injectable and female contraceptives (66, 81) Privacy and convenience of self-injectable contraceptives (81) Female autonomy to control female contraceptive use(45, 66) Condom fatigue and HIV fear (45)	Conservative views on condom use and messaging (e.g. using condoms is a sin, condoms may encourage early sexual debut) (32, 70) Belief that adolescents are too young for condom promotion and sexual activity ³ Fear of needles and self-injection for injectable contraceptives (81) Concerns with not being able to use condoms properly (70) Belief that condoms cause AIDS and other diseases (70) Concerns about the effect of cervical contraceptive being in the body for a long time (66) Concern with stigma(45) Waiting times at health facilities (45)
PrEP	Prevents transmission in serodiscordant couples(45) Easy to use (45)	Conflict with traditional methods and beliefs(45) Fear of side effects (45)
Psychosocial home-based care		Program more relevant to caregiver versus adolescent needs (72) Lack of financial support in a context of widespread poverty (72)

Discussion

Findings of this review indicate two positive trends. The first is an increase, over the past decade, in the number of acceptability studies with adolescents and youth on the continent. Though numbers are overall low, this could signal increasing recognition of the value of engaging young people when designing and implementing interventions intended for them. The second is that acceptability of interventions assessed was generally high. This suggests an overall good alignment of interventions with adolescent needs and preferences. While studies focusing on acceptability among general adolescent populations are scarce even in high income countries, our findings of overall high acceptability were in line with a review on the acceptability of e-mental health

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3 services for children, adolescents, and young adults conducted in Canada (82). However,
4 we should also be aware of the possibility of publication bias (83, 84), as research
5 showing less favourable acceptability results may be less likely to be written up and
6 published.
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11 A key limitation of this review is that we did not include grey literature, given available
12 resources, the review's already broad scope, and to ensure a minimum quality of studies
13 included. We also did not include studies published before 2010 and after June 2020, or
14 studies that weren't published in English, so the review may have excluded relevant
15 studies outside of this time period or carried out in African countries where English is not
16 the (only) official language. We also did not conduct a quality assessment, given the
17 heterogeneity of interventions assessed and study designs; however, we note that this is
18 not a requirement of a mapping review, which aims to summarise available evidence in
19 an area versus focus on a particular research question (85-87).
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26 **Acceptability findings**

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28 Despite the diversity of intervention settings, types of interventions and modes of
29 delivery across studies, several common themes emerged from reasons given by
30 adolescents to explain why specific interventions were acceptable to them. These
31 included the product or intervention being easy to use, knowledge of the intervention or
32 knowledge provided by the intervention, the intervention allowing for (greater)
33 autonomy, adolescents feeling supported while participating in the intervention and
34 feeling assured that their privacy and confidential information would be protected. Ease
35 of use (88, 89) and support received (90) from the intervention were reasons for
36 acceptability in high income countries. Although reasons for 'unacceptability' were more
37 diverse, overarching themes could also be identified among these, for example:
38 conservative views about the intervention or its content; concerns around intervention
39 costs, access and inclusiveness; fear of pain and side effects (for biomedical
40 interventions); stigma, myths or distrust; and lack of knowledge or support. The cost (91)
41 of interventions, pain (92) and conservative views about the intervention (93) have also
42 been outlined as reasons for unacceptability among adolescents and youth in low middle
43 income and high income countries. While certain drivers of unacceptability mirrored
44 those of acceptability (e.g. knowledge and support), these drivers mostly differed,
45 suggesting that acceptability and unacceptability are not necessarily represented by one
46 continuum.
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55 These findings suggest that intervention developers and implementers across the
56 continent should pay attention to key aspects of interventions and their delivery that
57 adolescents clearly care about and seek to address these from the intervention
58 development phase. They should ensure that adolescents are provided with adequate
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3 knowledge, training, and resources to properly understand the intervention and feel
4 confident in their ability to use it and that they have access to sufficient logistical and
5 emotional support while participating. They should also ensure that these young
6 people's confidential information is protected, so that they are in turn protected from
7 much-feared stigma and other potential negative social consequences. Moreover, they
8 should bear in mind that adolescents value autonomy and that this has a gender
9 dimension. Autonomy relates not only to being able to choose to participate in and use
10 an intervention, but also being empowered by the knowledge it may provide and the
11 greater control it may afford young people (particularly young women) in managing high
12 risk situations and unequal relationships.
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19 It may also be worth paying particular attention to acceptability findings for specific
20 types of interventions, given current African and global public health challenges. For
21 example, the role of digital technology in achieving many of the SDGs is well documented
22 (94) and merits particular attention in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic (95, 96).
23 While young people remain the most connected population group to digital
24 platforms(97), there is a clear digital divide, as more than 60% of young adults in Africa do
25 not have access to internet (98, 99). Findings of this review show overall high
26 acceptability of e-Health interventions (34, 50), as adolescents highlighted opportunities
27 presented by digital technology, for example by reducing the cost of in-person
28 interaction (53). Yet concerns raised around connectivity issues, lack of access to devices
29 and unintended disclosure of confidential information (53, 73) represent challenges for
30 the acceptability, equitable access, and effectiveness of e-Health programs. It is
31 therefore important for intervention providers to assess these challenges early on, and
32 to explore ways of potentially increasing access to devices or technologies within the
33 intervention itself or by supporting concurrent initiatives (65).
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39 Low acceptability of several interventions aimed at increasing contraceptive use and HIV
40 testing also merits particular attention. HIV transmission and relatively low rates of HIV
41 testing and linkage to antiretroviral therapy (ART) remain a concern among young adults
42 (100, 101). Several studies included in this review highlighted, for example, adolescents'
43 fear of stigma and lack of privacy regarding HIV testing interventions in schools (74),
44 concerns about not being able to properly perform oral HIV testing on their own (76) and
45 conservative views of contraceptive promotion and use (32, 70). These perspectives are
46 likely shaped by inadequate understanding of interventions, but also by social norms
47 surrounding sexuality and contraception within adolescents' homes, schools, and
48 communities (102, 103). Also, fear of vaccines and their side effects (104, 105) are
49 important to note and address, in relation not only to HPV prevention, but also to the
50 current Covid-19 vaccine rollout.
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58 All of the above examples highlight the importance of strengthening adolescents'
59 knowledge of interventions and how to interact with them, but also of understanding
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3 and engaging with the broader context within which adolescent acceptability is shaped
4 (102). One way to achieve this is to involve adolescents (preferably potential end-users)
5 early in the design and planning phase of the intervention and – if possible - at various
6 stages of the intervention life cycle. Yet, as indicated above, less than half of the studies
7 in this review (42%) assessed prospective acceptability and very few studies involved
8 adolescents in the study design and/or at multiple phases of the intervention. There is
9 clearly potential to allow for more meaningful and consistent adolescent engagement, if
10 young people are to have a stronger role in shaping the development, adaptation and
11 scale up of interventions (20).
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16 A second key approach would be to engage early on and assess acceptability with other
17 stakeholders who are central to an intervention being well-targeted, well-implemented
18 and accepted by adolescents and the broader community. These may include
19 intervention implementers and facilitators, but also caregivers, partners and peers,
20 teachers and community leaders. As noted above, 25 studies in this review also assessed
21 acceptability of other types of stakeholders. Future review analyses and acceptability
22 studies could further focus on acceptability among these groups of individuals, and its
23 implications for adolescent acceptability and intervention success.
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29 **Gaps and key areas for future research**

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31 Our review highlights several key gaps and related areas for future intervention
32 acceptability research. First, there appears to be a gap in geographical coverage,
33 particularly in West, Central and North Africa. However, as noted above, confining our
34 search to English language publications may have excluded some studies from African
35 countries where French is the first language. Given that adolescent needs and
36 preferences are likely to differ across areas with very different social and cultural norms
37 and faith contexts (106), we cannot simply extrapolate acceptability findings to other
38 countries or communities across the continent.
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43 Second, there is clearly scope for more acceptability research in important areas for
44 adolescent development beyond (physical) health and, within the health sector, beyond
45 HIV. As important as reducing HIV transmission and increasing testing and treatment
46 adherence may be in this population (100, 101), they are clearly not the only dimensions
47 of adolescent health and broader wellbeing that merit attention and investment. There is
48 a glaring lack of acceptability studies in areas of adolescent development beyond SDG 3.
49 These include education access and outcomes, employment opportunities, access to
50 water and other services, gender equality and protection from violence, social protection
51 and mental health (107).
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56 The focus on specific types of interventions likely reflects, to a large extent, global health
57 funding and research priorities over the past decades. There has been a considerable
58 amount of international aid dedicated to addressing HIV (108, 109) and particular concern
59 around the acceptability of HIV interventions. Moreover, the concentration of
60 acceptability research in specific countries in Africa is likely in part a reflection of

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3 disparities in independent research infrastructure and capacity across the continent (110,
4 111). It would also seem that ‘acceptability’ is a concept and term that has gained traction
5 primarily within the health sector (20). The extension of acceptability research to
6 geographical and developmental areas where it is currently scarce therefore cannot be
7 addressed solely by decisions of individual research teams. It will to some extent require
8 a change in global health and funding priorities, and the ‘adoption’ of acceptability
9 research by other sectors.
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13 A third gap highlighted by this review is the considerable scope to further conceptualise
14 the construct of acceptability, by more clearly defining it and identifying its key
15 components. Our review reinforced the absence of a clear or standard definition of
16 acceptability, or common tools and indicators. In fact, the large majority of papers
17 included in this review (48) referred to the concept of acceptability without defining it at
18 all, requiring the reader to review the questions and indicators used to gain some
19 understanding of how the construct of acceptability was conceptualised and
20 operationalized. As highlighted by other authors, this lack of common definitions and
21 frameworks makes the selection of measurement indicators for empirical enquiry in this
22 area more difficult and the comparability of acceptability results challenging (112, 113).
23 There have been recent efforts to address these gaps; in particular, Sekhon and
24 colleagues’ theoretical framework for acceptability (TFA), published in 2017 (20), has
25 made a valuable contribution to the scarce conceptual literature in the field. However,
26 there is still much work to be done to apply and test the framework in specific
27 populations. For example, its relevance and completeness in investigating acceptability
28 among adolescents, in less-resourced settings and beyond the (biomedical) health sector
29 is still unclear. Also unclear is the important link between intervention acceptability and
30 uptake, considering that willingness to use the intervention is often included among
31 questions used to assess acceptability (see table S2). Lastly, it is encouraging to note that
32 a relatively large number of studies in our review used mixed methods approaches to
33 assess acceptability; however, there is clearly still scope to employ and combine more
34 innovative methodologies (55, 65).
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45 **Conclusion**

46 As the first systematic review to aggregate and synthesise a decade of acceptability
47 studies with adolescents and youth in Africa, we believe this study makes a valuable
48 contribution to the African and global literature on acceptability. It highlights the overall
49 high level of acceptability of the interventions assessed, and some of the reasons why
50 adolescents and young adults may or may not find interventions acceptable– both
51 specific to particular types of interventions and common across intervention types.
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54 However, it also exposes considerable scope for future acceptability research and review
55 work, to extend and strengthen the existing body of evidence. This should include
56 extending acceptability research beyond the health (and particularly HIV) sector and to
57 countries in Africa where this type of research is still scarce; including adolescents and
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3 other potential key stakeholders earlier, and potentially throughout, the intervention
4 process; further conceptualising the construct of acceptability; and investigating the
5 relationship between acceptability and intervention uptake and success.
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8 **Data availability statement**

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10 No additional data are available.

11 **Patient consent for publication**

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13 Not required.

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24 manuscript; LC reviewed and revised the manuscript; and LS reviewed and revised the
25 manuscript. All authors read, reviewed and approved the final manuscript.
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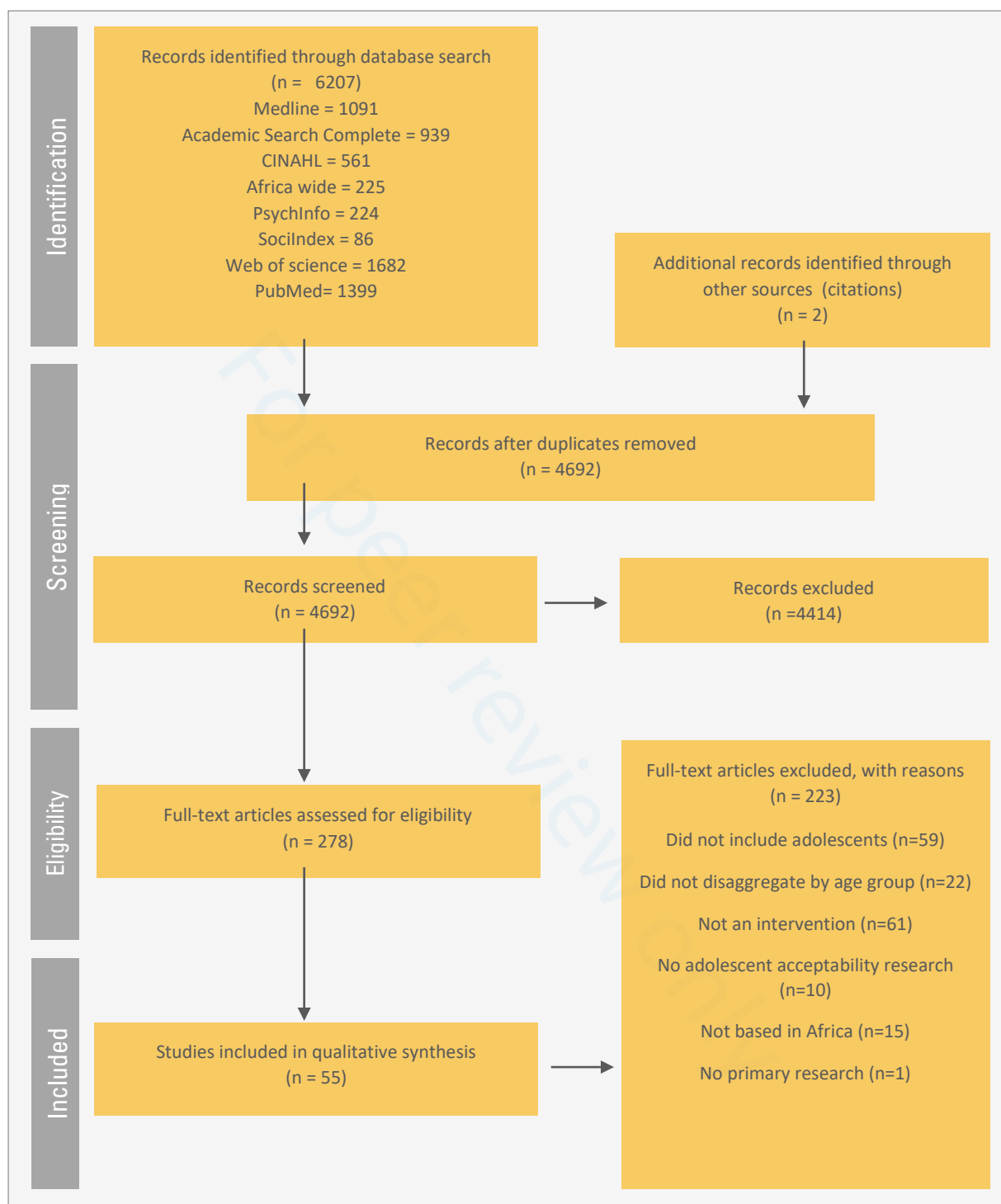


Figure 1: The PRISMA flow diagram describing the process of study selection.

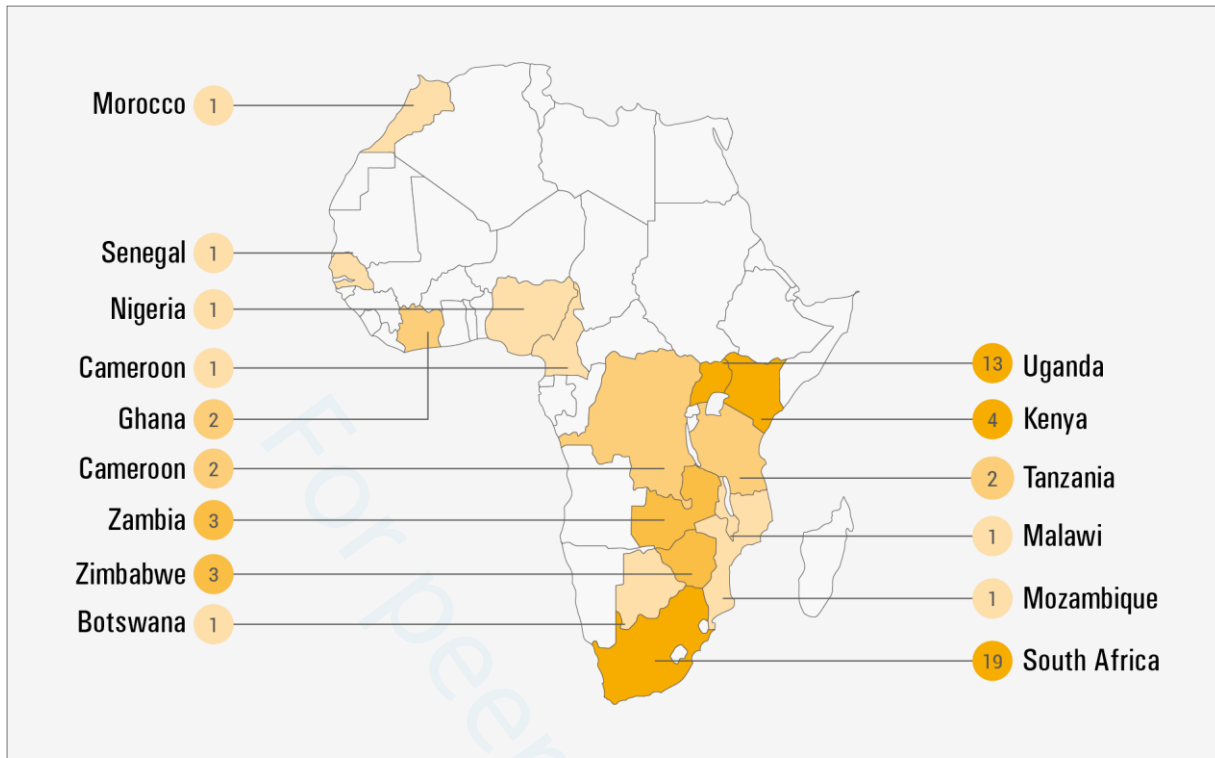


Figure 2: Study Location

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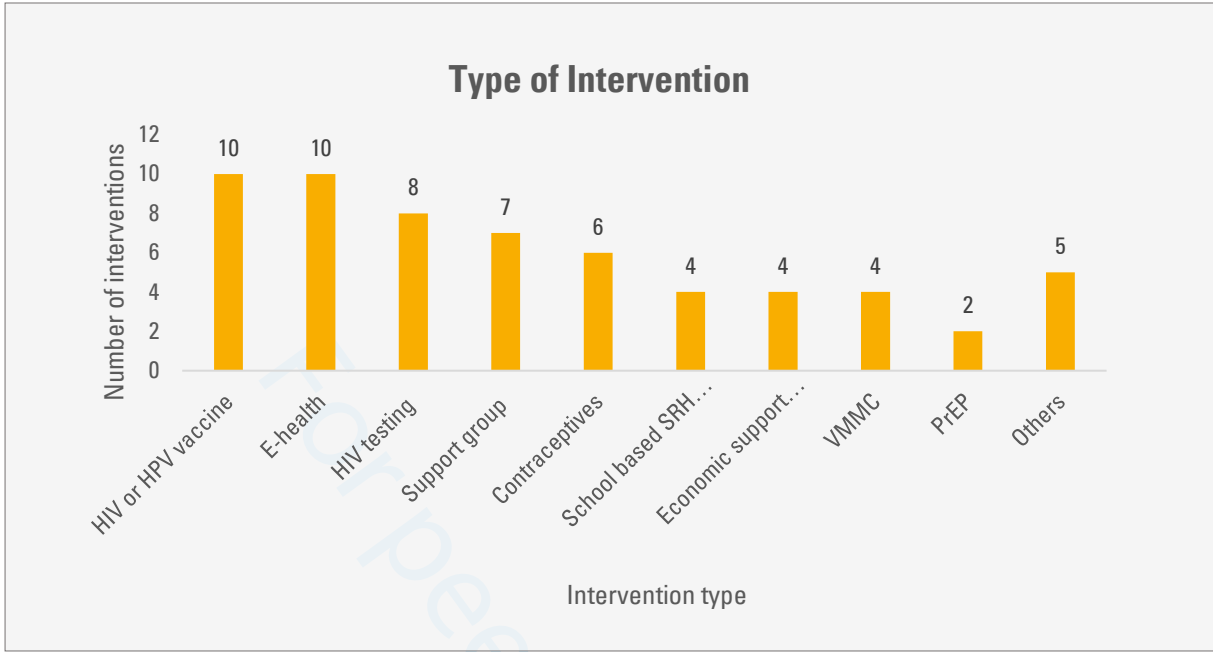


Figure 3: Intervention Types

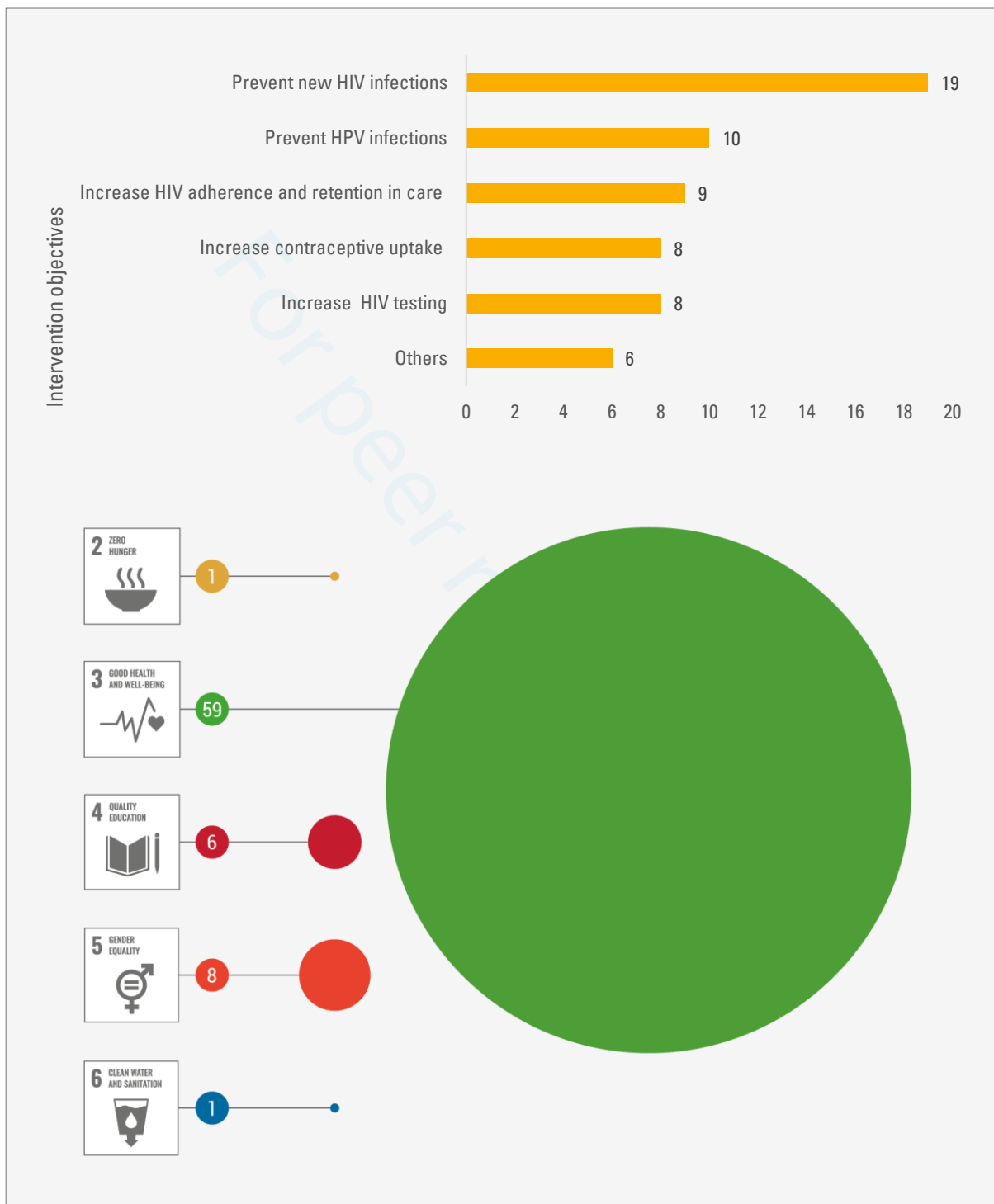
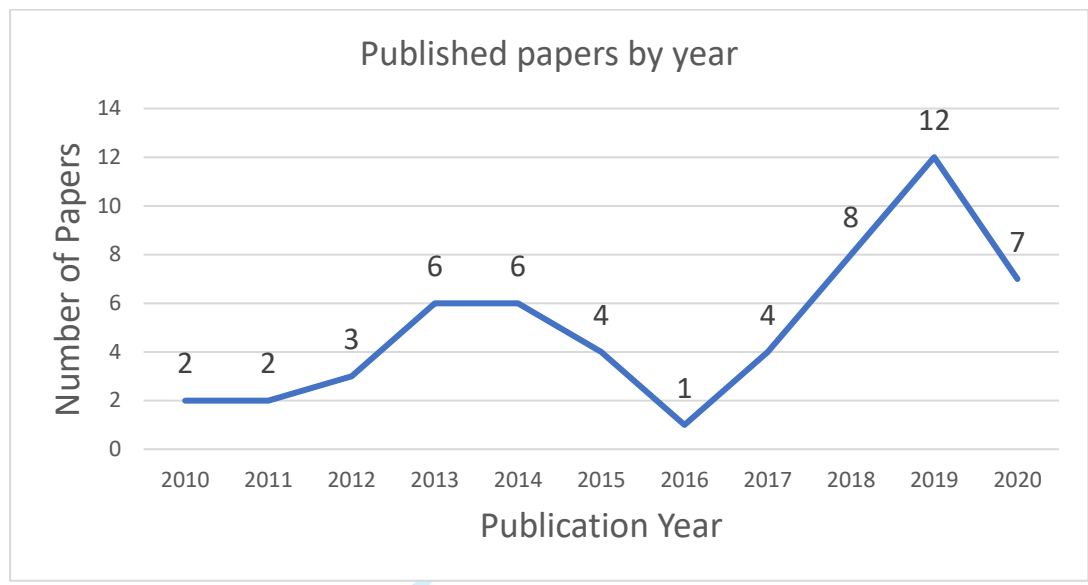


Figure 4: Intervention objectives and number of interventions linked to each SDG

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Publication Year



peer review only

Table S1. Systematic Review Search Strategy

<p>Search criteria (based on the Cochrane Collaboration's PICO criteria)</p>	<p>Population: adolescents or youth 10–24 years, living in Africa</p> <p>Intervention: primary research to determine adolescent and youth acceptability of one or more interventions aimed at improving their developmental outcomes (as per SDG indicators)</p> <p>Comparison: N/A</p> <p>Outcomes: adolescent acceptability findings, including: proportion of adolescents that find an intervention acceptable; information on what adolescents consider acceptable or not; reasons given for acceptability or lack of acceptability</p> <p>Study or intervention design: all types of study designs; no limiters on methodology</p>
<p>Example search term: search term used for EBSCOhost-linked databases</p>	<p>Adolescents or Youth: AB (youth OR “young person” OR “young people” OR “young women” OR “young men” OR “child*” OR “adoles*” OR “young adult” OR “teen*”)</p> <p>AND Acceptability: AB (acceptable OR acceptability OR co-creat* OR “adolescent engagement” OR “youth engagement” OR “teen* engagement” OR “participant engagement” OR “adolescent participation” OR “youth participation” OR “teen* participation” OR “participant input” OR “adolescent input” OR “youth input” OR “teen* input” OR “participant feedback” OR “adolescent feedback” OR “youth feedback” OR “teen* feedback” OR “participant consultation” OR “adolescent consultation” OR “youth consultation” OR “teen* consultation” OR “participant advisory” OR “adolescent advisory” OR “youth advisory” OR “teen* advisory” OR “participatory research”)</p> <p>AND Africa: AB (Africa* OR Algeria OR Angola OR Benin OR Botswana OR “Burkina Faso” OR Burundi OR Cameroon OR “Canary Islands” OR “Cape Verde” OR “Central African Republic” OR Chad OR Comoros OR Congo OR “Democratic Republic of Congo” OR Djibouti OR Egypt OR “Equatorial Guinea” OR Eritrea OR Ethiopia OR Gabon OR Gambia OR Ghana OR Guinea OR “Guinea Bissau” OR “Ivory Coast” OR “Cote d’Ivoire” OR Jamahiriya OR Jamahiryia OR Kenya OR Lesotho OR Liberia OR Libya OR Libia OR Madagascar OR Malawi OR Mali OR Mauritania OR Mauritius OR Mayote OR Morocco OR Mozambique OR Mocambique OR Namibia OR Niger OR Nigeria OR Principe OR Reunion OR Rwanda OR “Sao Tome” OR Senegal OR Seychelles OR “Sierra Leone” OR Somalia OR “St Helena” OR Sudan OR Swaziland OR Eswatini OR Tanzania OR Togo OR Tunisia OR</p>

	Uganda OR “Western Sahara” OR Zaire OR Zambia OR Zimbabwe) NOT (“guinea pig” OR “guinea pigs” OR “aspergillus niger” OR “African American”)
Databases searched	Web of Science, Medline, PsychInfo, SocilIndex, CINAHL, Africa-wide, Academic Search Complete and PubMed
Limiters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Published between 1 January 2010 and 30 June 2020- Peer-reviewed- English language

For peer review only

Authors	Title	Publication year
Atujuna et al	Contexts of vulnerability and the acceptability	2018
Ayissi et al	Awareness, Acceptability and Uptake of Hi	2012
Banda et al	Acceptability of an economic support com	2019
Barker et al	In-clinic adolescent peer group support for	2019
Bull et al	Cyber-Senga: Ugandan youth preferences	2010
Busza et al	Meeting the needs of adolescents living wi	2014
Carney et al	Acceptability and feasibility of a brief subst	2020
Cele & Archary	Acceptability of short text messages to sup	2019
Chirwa-Kambole et al	Acceptability of youth clubs focusing on co	2020
Cover et al	Acceptability of Contraceptive Self-Injectio	2017
Dulli, et al	An Online Support Group Intervention for	2018
Exavery et al	Acceptability of condom promotion and di	2012
Ferrand et al	Perception of Risk of Vertically Acquired HI	2011
Giovenco et al	“The time has arrived”: perceptions of beh	2018
Hacking et al	Peer Mentorship via Mobile Phones for Ne	2019
Hector et al	Acceptability and performance of a directly	2018
Herman et al	Knowledge, Perceptions and Acceptability	2013
Hoque et al	Human Papillomavirus Vaccination Accepta	2013
James et al	Integrated access to care and treatment (I	2018
Jayeoba et al	Acceptability of male circumcision among	2012
Kansiime et al	Menstrual health intervention and school	2020
Katahoire et al	Acceptability of HPV vaccine among young	2013
Katz et al	A Qualitative Analysis of Factors Influencin	2013
Khosa, Zulu and Shung-Ki	Acceptability and feasibility of a school-bas	2019
Khoza et al	Cash transfer interventions for sexual heal	2018
Kibel et al	Acceptability of a Pilot Intervention of Volu	2018
Knopf et al	“This is the medicine:” A Kenyan communi	2014
Kuo et al	Acceptability, feasibility, and preliminary ef	2020
Laidlaw et al	Using participatory methods to design an r	2017
MacCarthy et al	A randomized controlled trial study of the	2020
MacPhail et al	Acceptability and feasibility of cash transfe	2013
Madiba & Mokgatle	Students want HIV testing in schools” a for	2015
Mavhu et al	Is the PrePex device an alternative for surg	2019
Mburu et al	Knowledge of Cervical Cancer and Accepta	2019
Mitchell et al	Cell phone usage among adolescents in Ug	2011
Niasse et al	Adherence to ready-to-use food and accep	2020
Nuwasiima et al	Acceptability and utilization of family planr	2019
Parker et al	Feasibility analysis of an evidence-based pc	2013
Peltzer et al	Prevalence and Acceptability of Male Circu	2014
Rana et al	Short Message Service (SMS)-Based Interv	2015

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Ritchwood et al	HIV self-testing: South African young adult: 2019
Sabben et al	A Smartphone Game to Prevent HIV Amon, 2019
Sayles et al	Future HIV Vaccine Acceptability Among Yc 2010
Shanaube et al	Community intervention improves knowlec 2017
Smith et al	Mobile sexual health services for adolescer 2019
Smith, Wallace & Bekker	Adolescents' experience of a rapid HIV self 2016
Snyder et al	Preliminary results from Hlanganani (Comii 2014
Tabong et al	Acceptability and stakeholders perspective 2018
Tonen-Wolyec et al	Acceptability, feasibility, and individual pre 2019
Turiho et al	Effect of School-based Human Papillomavii 2014
Turiho, Okello & Muhwez	Perceptions of human papillomavirus vacci 2017
Van der Straten et al	Feasibility and potential acceptability of thi 2015
Ybarra et al	Acceptability and feasibility of CyberSenga 2014
Ybarra et al	Iterative Development of In This toGether, 2020
Zouheir et al	Knowledge of Human Papillomavirus and A 2015

NOTES

* % range included when acceptability was assessed quantitatively through multip

Country	Setting	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender	Number of interventions tested
South Africa	Peri-urban	14	15-17	Female & Male	4
Cameroon	Not stated	551	14-23	Female	1
Zambia	Rural	16	NA	Female & Male	1
Ghana	Not stated	35	12-19	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Urban	15	NA	Female & Male	1
Tanzania	Rural & Urban	14	15-19	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Not stated	30	13-17	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Rural and urban	100	12-19	Female & Male	1
Zambia	Rural	68	13-18	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Rural & Urban	46	15-19	Female	1
Nigeria	Not stated	349	15-24	Female & Male	1
Tanzania	Rural	1327	10-19	Female & Male	1
Zimbabwe	Urban	506	10-18	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Urban towns	57	16-17	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Periurban informal	110	12-25	Female & Male	1
Mozambique	Rural	496	16-20	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Urban, peri-urban	808	12-20	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Not stated	440	20-21	Female	1
South Africa	Peri-urban	15	15-19	Female & Male	1
Botswana	Not stated	269	13-18	Male	1
Uganda	Periurban	369	13-21	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Not stated	422	10-15	Female	1
South Africa	Urban	201	12-19	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Rural	18	16-19	Female	1
South Africa	Urban	49	16-18	Female & Male	1
Kenya	Not stated	116	12-24	Male	1
Kenya	Semirural	13	18-24	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Urban	73	13-15	Female & Male	1
Malawi	Not stated	54	15-24	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Not stated	147	15-24	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Rural	29	14-17	Female	1
South Africa	Rural & Urban	2741	14-19	Female & Male	1
Zimbabwe	Not stated	618	13-17	Male	1
Kenya	Not stated	180	12-18	Female	3
Uganda	Urban	1503	12-18	Female & Male	1
Senegal	Not stated	89	12-18	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Urban slum	142	18-24	Female	1
Democratic Republic of Congo	Not stated	13	15-24	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Urban & Rural	1489	15-24	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Urban	39	14-24	Female & Male	1

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South Africa	Rural	95	18-24	Female & Male	1
Kenya	Not stated	30	11-14	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Not stated	42	18-24	Female & Male	1
Zambia	Not stated	11175	15-19	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Not stated	303	16-24	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Not stated	224	16-25	Female & Male	1
South Africa	Peri-urban	109	16-24	Female & Male	1
Ghana	Urban	79	12-17	Female & Male	1
Democratic Re	Urban	628	15-19	Female & Male	1
Uganda.	Rural & Urban	827	9-19	Female	1
Uganda	Not stated	43	13-16	Female	1
Zimbabwe	Not stated	45	16-21	Female	1
Uganda	Urban	366	13-19	Female & Male	1
Uganda	Urban and peri-urban	376	18-22	Female & Male	1
Morocco	Urban	688	13-17	Female & Male	1

file questions

Type of intervention (category)	Type of intervention (sub-type)	Key objective of intervention	SDGs
HIV Vaccine, Contraceptives, HPV Vaccine	HIV Vaccine, Vaginal	To prevent new HIV	3
HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV infection	3
Economic support programs	Cash transfers	To increase contraceptive use	3, 4 & 5
Support group	Support group	To increase adherence	3
eHealth	Internet-based	To prevent new HIV	3 & 4
Others	Home based Care	To increase adherence	3
Others	Substance use	To reduce the prevalence	3
eHealth	SMS-based	To increase adherence	3
School based sexual and reproductive health	School based sexual health	To increase contraceptive use	3,4 & 5
Contraceptives	Injectable contraceptive	To increase contraceptive use	3 & 5
Support group	Support group	To increase adherence	3
Contraceptives	Condoms	To prevent new HIV	3
HIV testing	Provider initiated	To increase HIV testing	3
Other biomedical HIV prevention	PrEP	To prevent new HIV	3
eHealth	SMS-based	To increase adherence	3
HIV testing	Self-testing	To increase HIV testing	3
School based sexual and reproductive health	School based sexual health	To increase contraceptive use	3,4 & 5
HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV infection	3
Support group	Support group	To increase adherence	3
Other biomedical HIV prevention	VMMC	To prevent new HIV	3
School based sexual and reproductive health	School based sexual health	Improving menstrual health	6
HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV infection	3
HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV infection	3
Contraceptives	School-based contraceptive	To increase contraceptive use	3 & 5
Economic support programs	Cash transfers	To prevent new HIV	3
Other biomedical HIV prevention	VMMC	To prevent new HIV	3
Support group	Support group	To prevent new HIV	3
Support group	Support group	To reduce HIV risk	3
eHealth	SMS-based	To provide health information	3
eHealth	SMS-based	To increase adherence	3
Economic support programs	Cash transfers	To prevent new HIV	3
HIV testing	School based	To increase HIV testing	3
Other biomedical HIV prevention	VMMC	To prevent new HIV	3
HPV Vaccine, Cervical cancer	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV infection	3
eHealth	SMS-based	To prevent new HIV	3
Others	Nutrition/HIV	To reduce malnutrition	2&3
Economic support programs	Non-cash strategy	To increase contraceptive use	3, 4 & 5
Support group	Support group	To provide psychosocial support	3
Other biomedical HIV prevention	VMMC	To prevent new HIV	3
eHealth	SMS-based	To increase adherence	3

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HIV testing	Self-testing	To increase HIV tes
eHealth	Game-based	To prevent new HI\3
HIV Vaccine	HIV Vaccine	To prevent new HI\3
HIV testing	Home based	To increase HIV tes
HIV testing	Mobile clinic	To increase HIV tes
HIV testing	Self-testing	To increase HIV tes
Support group	Support group	To increase adhere
School based sexual and repr	School based sexi	To increase contrac
HIV testing	Self-testing	To increase HIV tes
HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV inf
HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV inf
Contraceptives	Cervical barriers (To increase contrac
eHealth	Internet-based	To prevent new HI\3
eHealth	SMS-based	To prevent new HI\3
HPV Vaccine	HPV Vaccine	To prevent HPV inf

	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Methods used
8	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs and FGDs
9	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
10	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
11	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs and IDIs
12	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
13	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
14	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
15	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
16	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
17	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
18	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
19	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
20	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
21	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs through Face
22	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
23	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
24	Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	Survey (open-enc
25	Prospective	NA	NA	Mixed methods	Survey (Question
26	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
27	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
28	Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
29	Prospective	NA	NA	Mixed methods	Survey (Question
30	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
31	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
32	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
33	Prospective & Ret	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (structure
34	Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and IDIs
35	Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and IDIs
36	Retrospective	Willingness or rel	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
37	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
38	Prospective	NA	Social ecological	Qualitative	FGDs
39	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
40	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
41	Retrospective	Perception amon	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and survey
42	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
43	Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Paper satisfactio
44	Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Paper satisfactio
45	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
46	Concurrent	Cognitive and em	Sekhon et al's ac	Mixed methods	FGDs and Survey
47	Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and Survey
48	Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and Survey
49	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
50	Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
51	Prospective & Ret	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
52	Prospective & Ret	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
53	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
54	Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and survey
55	Concurrent	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
56	Concurrent	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
57	Concurrent	How the intende	Bowen Feasibility	Mixed methods	FGDs, activity she
58	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Question
59	Prospective	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs, structured

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Prospective & Ret	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs; direct obser
Concurrent	Appeal, relevanc	NA	Mixed methods	Survey (Audio Co
Prospective	NA	Value-expectanc	Qualitative	FGDs
Concurrent	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Househo
Concurrent	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (research
Retrospective	Preference for us	NA	Quantitative	Survey (administ
Prospective & Ret	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs, attendanc
Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
Prospective & Ret	Consenting to ar	NA	Quantitative	Survey (semi-stru
Prospective & Ret	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and survey
Retrospective	NA	Symbolic interact	Qualitative	FGDs
Retrospective	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and survey
Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs, surveys (ac
Prospective & Ret	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs via Facebo
Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (mix of fa

Indicators and questions	Overall acceptability high/low	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if	Other stakeholders for whom acceptability
FGDs and IDI interview topic guide	High	NA	Healthcare Workers
Survey included questions on: parents	High	76	NA
Semi structured FGDs and IDIs explored	High	NA	Community gate keepers
FGD semi structured interview guide	High	NA	NA
FGDs covered: acceptability of topic	High	NA	NA
Topic guides included: open-ended	Low	NA	Primary caregivers and providers
No questions stated and not verified	High	NA	Caregivers
Survey probed whether: participants	High	65	NA
Semi-structured FGD guide explored	High	NA	Teachers
IDI semi structured interview guide	High	NA	NA
Semi structured IDI guide explored	High	NA	NA
Survey asked whether adolescents	Low	37	NA
Questionnaire assessed: reasons for	High	99	Family members
Survey questions focused on will	High	84-90	Clinical service providers
IDs explored: what participants	High	NA	NA
Post-test questionnaire captured	High	85	NA
Survey assessed: proportion of participants	High	96	Teachers
The questionnaire covered: behaviour	High	77	NA
No clear acceptability questions	High	NA	Facility Managers and support
Structured questionnaires included	High	75	Parents/guardians
Specific acceptability questions	High	NA	Teachers and parents
FGDs explored reasons for being	High	NA	NA
Interviews covered: contextual information	High	NA	Caregivers
FGD topic guide asked: how participants	Low	NA	Parents
Interviews focused on topics such	High	NA	
The questionnaire consisted of 10	High	81-99	NA
FGD questions focused on whether	High	NA	Community leaders
Participants ranked intervention	High	100	Parents
FGDs covered: participants opinions	High	NA	Adults aged 22-50 years from
FGDs covered: whether participants	High	88-97	Providers, counsellors, pharmac
FGDs covered: whether participants	High	NA	Caregivers
Questionnaire included 2 main	High	77	NA
Questionnaire items included: reasons	High	95-97	NA
Through the survey adolescents	High	64	NA
The questionnaire covered: 1) accept	High	51-61	NA
The structured questionnaire covered	High	79-87	Caregivers
Survey assessed: willingness to participate	High	93	
FGDs covered satisfaction with topic	High	NA	Facilitators
Men and women were asked about	High	46-61	NA
FGDs covered: general reaction to	High	97	NA

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Semi-structured focus group the High	80-100	NA
The survey included questions on High	67-97	Parents
Semi-structured FGDs covered: v High	NA	NA
The question was a binary questi High	81	NA
An 11-item scale, developed from High	90	NA
3-item acceptability scale assess High	90-99	NA
Formative phase FGDs explored High	85	NA
FGD topic guides explored: adole High	NA	Ghana Education Service Pro;
Survey included questions on: re High	95	Peer educators
FGDs discussed girls' observatio High	89-93	NA
FGD questions included: underst High	NA	Health workers, community l
FGDs explored attitudes about a High	71-93	NA
Topic guides for FGDs explored: High	77-94	NA
FGD topics queried issues relate High	NA	NA
Survey included 2 questions to a Low	27	NA

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nacist, client rep, and study coordinators

For peer review only

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leaders, teachers and parents

For peer review only

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agers Population Council Representative Members of Ghana Psychologist Association UNESCO

For peer review only

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○ Representative Teachers

For peer review only

Type of intervention (sub-type)	Authors	Paper Title	Publication year
HIV Vaccine	Sayles et al	Future HIV Vaccine Acceptability	2010
HIV Vaccine	Atujuna et al	Contexts of vulnerability and the	2018
HPV Vaccine	Turiho et al	Effect of School-based Human P:	2014
HPV Vaccine	Turiho, Okello & Muhwez	Perceptions of human papilloma	2017
HPV Vaccine	Zouheir et al	Knowledge of Human Papilloma	2015
HPV Vaccine	Mburu et al	Knowledge of Cervical Cancer an	2019
HPV Vaccine	Hoque et al	Human Papillomavirus Vaccinatio	2013
HPV Vaccine	Ayissi et al	Awareness, Acceptability and Uç	2012
HPV Vaccine	Katz et al	A Qualitative Analysis of Factors	2013
HPV Vaccine	Katahoire et al	Acceptability of HPV vaccine amc	2013

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Country	Setting (e.g. urban or rural)	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender	Key objective of intervention
South Africa	Not stated	42	18-24	Male & Female	To prevent new HIV i
South Africa	Peri-urban	14	15-17	Male & Female	To prevent new HIV i
Uganda.	Rural & Urban	827	9-19	Females	To prevent HPV infec
Uganda	Not stated	43	13-16	Females	To prevent HPV infec
Morocco	Urban	688	13-17	Male & Female	To prevent HPV infec
Kenya	Not stated	180	12-18	Females	To prevent HPV infec
South Africa	Not stated	440	20-21	Females	To prevent HPV infec
Cameroon	Not stated	551	14-23	Females	To prevent HPV infec
South Africa	Urban	201	12-19	Male & Female	To prevent HPV infec
Uganda	Not stated	422	10-15	Females	To prevent HPV infec

SDGs	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design
3	Prospective	NA	Value-expectancy an	Qualitative
3	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative
3	Prospective & Retro	NA	NA	Mixed methods
3	Retrospective	NA	Symbolic interaction	Qualitative
3	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative
3	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative
3	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative
3	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative
3	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative
3	Retrospective	Willingness or relt	NA	Qualitative

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	Methods used	Indicators and questions used	Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if reported)	Other stakeholders for which acceptability was assessed
8	FGDs	Semi-structured FGD	High	NA	NA
9	IDIs and FGDs	FGDs and IDI interview	High	NA	Healthcare Workers
10	FGDs and survey	FGDs discussed girls'	High	89-93	NA
11	FGDs	FGD questions included	High	NA	Health workers, community
12	Survey (mix of focus	Survey included 2 questions	Low	27	NA
13	Survey (Questionnaire	Through the survey	High	63.6	NA
14	Survey (Questionnaire	The questionnaire covered	High	77	NA
15	Survey (Questionnaire	Survey included questions	High	76	NA
16	IDIs	Interviews covered	High	NA	Caregivers
17	FGDs	FGDs explored reasons	High	NA	NA

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Type of intervention (sub-type)	Authors	Paper Title
Game-based	Sabben et al	A Smartphone Game to Prevent HIV Among
Internet-based	Bull et al	Cyber-Senga: Ugandan youth preferences for conte
Internet-based	Ybarra et al	Acceptability and feasibility of CyberSenga, an Inter
SMS-based	Laidlaw et al	Using participatory methods to design an mHealth i
SMS-based	Hacking et al	Diagnosed HIV-Positive Youths in Clinic Care in
SMS-based	Mitchell et al	Cell phone usage among adolescents in Uganda: ac
SMS-based	Rana et al	Short Message Service (SMS)-Based Intervention to
SMS-based	Ybarra et al	Iterative Development of In This toGether, the First
SMS-based	Cele & Archary	Acceptability of short text messages to support tre
SMS-based	MacCarthy et al	A randomized controlled trial study of the acceptab

Publication year	Country	Setting	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender
2019	Kenya	Not stated	30	11-14	Female & Male
2010	Uganda	Urban	15	NA	Female & Male
2014	Uganda	Urban	366	13-19	Female & Male
2017	Malawi	Not stated	54	15-24	Female & Male
2019	South Africa	Periurban inform	110	12-25	Female & Male
2011	Uganda	Urban	1503	12-18	Female & Male
2015	Uganda	Urban	39	14-24	Female & Male
2020	Uganda	Urban and periur	376	18-22	Female & Male
2019	South Africa	Rural and urban	100	12-19	Female & Male
2020	Uganda	Not stated	147	15-24	Female & Male

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Key objective of intervention	SDGs	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability
To prevent new HIV ir 3	3	Concurrent	Appeal, relevance,	NA
To prevent new HIV ir 3 & 4	3 & 4	Concurrent	NA	NA
To prevent new HIV ir 3	3	Concurrent	NA	NA
To provide health info 3	3	Prospective	NA	NA
To increase adherenc 3	3	Retrospective	NA	NA
To prevent new HIV ir 3	3	Prospective	NA	NA
To increase adherenc 3	3	Prospective	NA	NA
To prevent new HIV ir 3	3	Prospective & Re	NA	NA
To increase adherenc 3	3	Prospective	NA	NA
To increase adherenc 3	3	Concurrent	Cognitive and emot	Sekhon et al's acc

Study design	Methods used
Mixed methods Qualitative	Survey (Audio Comput FGDs
Mixed methods Qualitative	FGDs, surveys (adminis FGDs
Qualitative	IDIs
Quantitative	Survey (Questionnaire)
Mixed methods	FGDs, structured surve
Mixed methods	FGDs via Facebook anc
Quantitative	Survey (Questionnaire)
Mixed methods	FGDs and Survey (Que

Indicators and questions used**Overall
acceptability**

The survey included questions on: the game's appeal, High
 FGDs covered: acceptability of the concept of an Internet High
 experiences with the program, including: likes and High
 FGDs covered: participants opinion of receiving health in High
 IDIs explored: what participants understood by the Virtu High
 The questionnaire covered: 1) actual access of health infc High
 phone related issues; familiarity and comfort with text High
 protocol, ideas for the name of the intervention, the High
 Survey probed whether: participants would be willing to High
 intervention; how they felt about it; whether they High

% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if reported)	Other stakeholders for which acceptability was assessed
67-97	Parents
NA	NA
77-94	NA
NA	Adults aged 22-50 years from the same 2 villages
NA	NA
51-61	NA
97	NA
NA	NA
65	NA
88-97	Providers, counsellors, pharmacist, client rep, and study coordi

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Type of intervention (sub-type)	Authors	Paper Title	Publication year
Self-testing	Smith, Wallace & Be	Adolescents' experience of	2016
Self-testing	Ritchwood et al	HIV self-testing: South Africa	2019
Self-testing	Hector et al	Acceptability and performan	2018
Self-testing	Tonen-Wolyec et al	Acceptability, feasibility, and	2019
Home based	Shanaube et al	Community intervention imp	2017
School based	Madiba & Mokgatle	Students want HIV testing in	2015
Mobile clinic	Smith et al	Mobile sexual health service	2019
Provider initiated	Ferrand et al	Perception of Risk of Vertica	2011

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Country	Setting (e.g. urban or rural)	Sample size	Sample age range
South Africa	Not stated	224	16-25
South Africa	Rural	95	18-24
Mozambique	Rural	496	16-20
Democratic Republic of	Urban	628	15-19
Zambia	Not stated	11175	15-19
South Africa	Rural & Urban	2741	14-19
South Africa	Not stated	303	16-24
Zimbabwe	Urban	506	10-18

Sample gender	Key objective of intervention	SDGs	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Retrospective	Preference for using
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Prospective & Retro	NA
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Retrospective	NA
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Prospective & Retro	Consenting to and u:
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Concurrent	NA
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Prospective	NA
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Concurrent	NA
Male & Female	To increase HIV testing	3	Concurrent	NA

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	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Methods used	Indicators and questions used
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8	NA	Quantitative	Survey (administered 3-item acceptabil	
9	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs; direct observat	Semi-structured f
10	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Questionnaire)	Post-test questio
11	NA	Quantitative	Survey (semi-structur	Survey included c
12	NA	Quantitative	House-hold survey	The question was
13	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Questionnaire)	Questionnaire inc
14	NA	Quantitative	Survey (researcher ac	An 11-item scale, i
15	NA	Mixed methods	Open-ended question	Questionnaire as
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Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if reported)	Other stakeholders for which acceptability was assessed
High	90-99	NA
High	80-100	NA
High	85	NA
High	95	Peer educators
High	81	NA
High	77	NA
High	90	NA
High	99	Family members

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Authors	Paper Title	Publication year	Country
Barker et al	In-clinic adolescent peer group sup	2019	Ghana
Dulli, et al	An Online Support Group Intervent	2018	Nigeria
Snyder et al	Preliminary results from Hlanganan	2014	South Africa
Knopf et al	“This is the medicine:” A Kenyan cc	2014	Kenya
Parker et al	Feasibility analysis of an evidence-b	2013	Democratic Reput
Kuo et al	Acceptability, feasibility, and prelin	2020	South Africa
James et al	Integrated access to care and treat	2018	South Africa

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Setting (e.g. urban or rural)	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender	Key objective of intervention	SDGs
Not stated	35	12-19	Male & Female	To increase adherence ar	3
Not stated	349	15-24	Male & Female	To increase adherence ar	3
Peri-urban	109	16-24	Male & Female	To increase adherence ar	3
Semirural	13	18-24	Male & Female	To prevent new HIV infec	3
Not stated	13	15-24	Male & Female	To provide psychosocial :	3
Urban	73	13-15	Male & Female	To reduce HIV risk behav	3
Peri-urban	15	15-19	Male & Female	To increase adherence ar	3

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	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Methods used
7	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
8	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs through Facebook
9	Prospective and Ret	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs, attendance regist
10	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs
11	Concurrent	How the intend	Bowen Feasibilit	Mixed methods	FGDs, activity sheets/ ev
12	Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Paper satisfactio
13	Concurrent	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
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Indicators and questions used	Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if	Other stakeholders for which acceptability
FGD semi structur	High	NA	NA
Semi structured I	High	NA	NA
Formative phase F	High	85	NA
FGD questions foc	High	NA	Community leaders
FGDs covered sati:	High	NA	Facilitators
Participants ranke	High	100	Parents
No clear acceptab	High	NA	Facility Managers and support group

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p facilitators

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Type of intervention (sub-type)	Authors	Paper Title
Condoms	Exavery et al	Acceptability of condor
Condoms	Mburu et al	Knowledge of Cervical
School-based contraceptive clinic (SBCC)	Khosa, Zulu and Shung-Ki	Acceptability and feasil
Injectable contraception	Cover et al	Acceptability of Contra
Cervical barriers (CB) - (Ortho All-Flex® diaphr	Van der Straten et al	Feasibility and potentia
Vaginal rings	Atujuna et al	Contexts of vulnerabili

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Publication year	Country	Setting	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender
2012	Tanzania	Rural	1327	10-19	Male & Female
2019	Kenya	Not stated	180	12-18	Females
2019	South Africa	Rural	18	16-19	Female
2017	Uganda	Rural & Urban	46	15-19	Female
2015	Zimbabwe	Not stated	45	16-21	Female
2018	South Africa	Peri-urban	14	15-17	Male & Female

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Key objective of intervention	SDGs	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design
To prevent new HIV 3		Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative
To prevent HPV infe 3		Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative
To increase contrac 3 & 5	3 & 5	Prospective	NA	Social ecological fi	Qualitative
To increase contrac 3 & 5	3 & 5	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative
To increase contrac 3 & 5	3 & 5	Retrospective	NA	NA	Mixed methods
To prevent new HIV 3		Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative

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	Methods used	Indicators and questions used	Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if appropriate)
8	Survey (Questionnaire)	Survey asked whether	Low	37
9	Survey (Questionnaire)	Through the survey	High	64
10	FGDs	FGD topic guide asked	Low	NA
11	IDIs	IDI semi structured interview	High	NA
13	FGDs and survey (Questionnaire)	FGDs explored attitudes	High	71-93
14	IDIs and FGDs	FGDs and IDI interviews	High	NA

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2 **Other stakeholders**
3 **for which**
4 **acceptability was**
5 **assessed**

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7 NA

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9 NA

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11 Parents

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13 NA

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15 Healthcare workers

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Authors	Paper Title	Publication year	Country	Setting	Sample size
Chirwa-Kambole	Acceptability of youth	2020	Zambia	Rural	68
Herman et al	Knowledge, Percepti	2013	Uganda	Urban, peri-urbar	808
Kansiime et al	Menstrual health inte	2020	Uganda	Periurban	369
Tabong et al	Acceptability and stat	2018	Ghana	Urban	79

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Sample age range	Sample gender	Key objective of intervention	SDGs	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability
13-18	Female & Male	To increase contraceptive 3,4 & 5		Retrospective
12-20	Female & Male	To increase contraceptive 3,4 & 5		Prospective
13-21	Female & Male	To improve menstruation 6		Concurrent
12-17	Female & Male	To increase contraceptive 3,4 & 5		Prospective

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Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Methods used	Indicators and questions used
NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	Semi-structured FC
NA	NA	Mixed methods	Survey (QuesSurvey assessed: p	
NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and IDI:Specific acceptabil	
NA	NA	Qualitative	FGDs	FGD topic guides e

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Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if reported)	Other stakeholders for which acceptability was assessed
High	NA	Teachers
High	96	Teachers
High	NA	Teachers and parents
High	NA	Ghana Education Service Program Managers Heads of

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f Basic Educational Schools Ghana Health Service ASRH Program Managers Population Council Rej

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representative Members of Ghana Psychologist Association UNESCO Representative Teachers

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Type of intervention	Authors	Paper Title	Publication year
Cash transfers	Banda et al	Acceptability of ar 2019	
Cash transfers	Khoza et al	Cash transfer inte 2018	
Cash transfers	MacPhail et al	Acceptability and 12013	
Family planning benefit cards	Nuwasiima et al	Acceptability and 12019	

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Country	Setting (e.g. urban or rural)	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender
Zambia	Rural	16	NA	Female & Male
South Africa	Urban	49	16-18	Female & Male
South Africa	Rural	29	14-17	Female
Uganda	Urban slum	142	18-24	Female

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Key objective of intervention	SDGs	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability
To increase contraceptive	3, 4 & 5	Concurrent	NA	NA
To prevent new HIV inf	3	Concurrent	NA	NA
To prevent new HIV inf	3	Concurrent	NA	NA
To increase contraceptive	3, 4 & 5	Concurrent	NA	NA

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Study design	Methods used	Indicators and questions used	Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if
Qualitative	FGDs and IDIs	Semi structured FGDs	High	NA
Qualitative	IDIs	Interviews focused on	High	NA
Mixed methods	FGDs and Survey	FGDs covered: whether	High	NA
Quantitative	Survey (Questionnaire)	Survey assessed: will it	High	93

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2 **Other stakeholders**
3 **for which**
4 **acceptability was**
5 **assessed**

7 Community gate keepers

8 NA

9 Caregivers

10 NA

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Type of intervention (sub-type)	Authors	Paper Title	Publication year	Country
VMMC	Jayeoba et al	Acceptability of male cir	2012	Botswana
VMMC	Kibel et al	Acceptability of a Pilot I	2018	Kenya
VMMC	Mavhu et al	Is the PrePex device an	2019	Zimbabwe
VMMC	Peltzer et al	Prevalence and Accepta	2014	South Africa

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Setting	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender	Key objective of intervention	SDGs
Not stated	269	13-18	Male	To prevent new HIV infe 3	
Not stated	116	12-24	Male	To prevent new HIV infe 3	
Not stated	618	13-17	Male	To prevent new HIV infe 3	
Urban & Rural	1489	15-24	Female & /	To prevent new HIV infe 3	

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Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Methods used
Prospective & Retr	NA	NA	Quantitative	Structured questic
Retrospective	Perception among st	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and survey (c
Retrospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Questionn
Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Questionn

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Indicators and questions used	Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if reported)	Other stakeholders for which acceptability was assessed
Structured questionnaire	High	75	Parents/guardians
The questionnaire	High	81-99	NA
Questionnaire iter	High	95-97	NA
Men and women v	High	46-61	NA

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Type of intervention (sub-type)	Authors	Paper Title	Publication year	Country	Setting	Sample size
PrEP	Atujuna et al	Contexts of v	2018	South Africa	Peri-urban	14
PrEP	Giovenco et al	“The time ha	2018	South Africa	Urban towns	57

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Sample age range	Sample gender	Key objective of intervention	SDGs	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability
15-17	Female & MaTo prevent new	3	Prospective	NA	
16-17	Female & MaTo prevent new	3	Prospective	NA	

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Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Methods used	Indicators and questions used	Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if ...)
NA	Qualitative	IDIs and FGDs	FGDs and IDI	High	NA
NA	Mixed metho	Survey (Ques	Survey quest	High	84-90

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3 **Other stakeholders**
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9 Healthcare workers

10 Clinical service providers
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Type of intervention (sub-type)	Authors	Paper Title	Publication year	Country
Rectal microbicide	Atujuna et al	Contexts c	2018	South Africa
Home based Care	Busza et al	Meeting th	2014	Tanzania
Substance use preventic	Carney et al	Acceptabil	2020	South Africa
Cervical cancer screenin	Mburu et al	Knowledgı	2019	Kenya
Nutrition/HIV	Niasse et al	Adherenc€	2020	Senegal

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Setting	Sample size	Sample age range	Sample gender	Key objective of intervention	SDGs
Peri-urban	14	15-17	Female & Male	To prevent new HIV infections	3
Rural & Urban	14	15-19	Female & Male	To increase adherence and retention	3
Not stated	30	13-17	Female & Male	To reduce the prevalence of sexually transmitted infections	3
Not stated	180	12-18	Females	To prevent HPV infection	3
Not stated	89	12-18	Female & Male	To reduce malnutrition among children	2&3

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	Prospective, concurrent or retrospective acceptability	Explicit definition of acceptability	Conceptual framework used for acceptability	Study design	Methods used
7	Prospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs and FGDs
8	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
9	Retrospective	NA	NA	Qualitative	IDIs
11	Prospective	NA	NA	Quantitative	Survey (Questionnaire)
12	Concurrent	NA	NA	Mixed methods	FGDs and survey (s)

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Indicators and questions used	Overall acceptability	% adolescents that found the intervention acceptable (if	Other stakeholders for which acceptability
FGDs and IDI interview	High	NA	Healthcare workers
Topic guides included	Low	NA	Primary caregivers and providers
No questions stated	High	NA	Caregivers
Through the survey	High	63.6	NA
The structured quest	High	79-87	Caregivers

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PRISMA 2020 Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
TITLE			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review.	Pg. 1
ABSTRACT			
Abstract	2	See the PRISMA 2020 for Abstracts checklist.	Pg. 2
INTRODUCTION			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of existing knowledge.	Pg. 5
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of the objective(s) or question(s) the review addresses.	Pg. 5
METHODS			
Eligibility criteria	5	Specify the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the review and how studies were grouped for the syntheses.	Pg. 5,6
Information sources	6	Specify all databases, registers, websites, organisations, reference lists and other sources searched or consulted to identify studies. Specify the date when each source was last searched or consulted.	Pg. 6
Search strategy	7	Present the full search strategies for all databases, registers and websites, including any filters and limits used.	Table S1
Selection process	8	Specify the methods used to decide whether a study met the inclusion criteria of the review, including how many reviewers screened each record and each report retrieved, whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pg. 6
Data collection process	9	Specify the methods used to collect data from reports, including how many reviewers collected data from each report, whether they worked independently, any processes for obtaining or confirming data from study investigators, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	Pg. 6
Data items	10a	List and define all outcomes for which data were sought. Specify whether all results that were compatible with each outcome domain in each study were sought (e.g. for all measures, time points, analyses), and if not, the methods used to decide which results to collect.	NA
	10b	List and define all other variables for which data were sought (e.g. participant and intervention characteristics, funding sources). Describe any assumptions made about any missing or unclear information.	NA
Study risk of bias assessment	11	Specify the methods used to assess risk of bias in the included studies, including details of the tool(s) used, how many reviewers assessed each study and whether they worked independently, and if applicable, details of automation tools used in the process.	NA
Effect measures	12	Specify for each outcome the effect measure(s) (e.g. risk ratio, mean difference) used in the synthesis or presentation of results.	NA
Synthesis methods	13a	Describe the processes used to decide which studies were eligible for each synthesis (e.g. tabulating the study intervention characteristics and comparing against the planned groups for each synthesis (item #5)).	Pg. 6
	13b	Describe any methods required to prepare the data for presentation or synthesis, such as handling of missing summary statistics, or data conversions.	NA
	13c	Describe any methods used to tabulate or visually display results of individual studies and syntheses.	NA
	13d	Describe any methods used to synthesize results and provide a rationale for the choice(s). If meta-analysis was performed, describe the model(s), method(s) to identify the presence and extent of statistical heterogeneity, and software package(s) used.	NA
	13e	Describe any methods used to explore possible causes of heterogeneity among study results (e.g. subgroup analysis, meta-regression).	NA
	13f	Describe any sensitivity analyses conducted to assess robustness of the synthesized results.	NA
Reporting bias assessment	14	Describe any methods used to assess risk of bias due to missing results in a synthesis (arising from reporting biases).	NA
Certainty	15	Describe any methods used to assess certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for an outcome.	NA



PRISMA 2020 Checklist

Section and Topic	Item #	Checklist item	Location where item is reported
assessment			
RESULTS			
Study selection	16a	Describe the results of the search and selection process, from the number of records identified in the search to the number of studies included in the review, ideally using a flow diagram.	Pg. 6
	16b	Cite studies that might appear to meet the inclusion criteria, but which were excluded, and explain why they were excluded.	NA
Study characteristics	17	Cite each included study and present its characteristics.	Pg. 7
Risk of bias in studies	18	Present assessments of risk of bias for each included study.	NA
Results of individual studies	19	For all outcomes, present, for each study: (a) summary statistics for each group (where appropriate) and (b) an effect estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval), ideally using structured tables or plots.	NA
Results of syntheses	20a	For each synthesis, briefly summarise the characteristics and risk of bias among contributing studies.	NA
	20b	Present results of all statistical syntheses conducted. If meta-analysis was done, present for each the summary estimate and its precision (e.g. confidence/credible interval) and measures of statistical heterogeneity. If comparing groups, describe the direction of the effect.	NA
	20c	Present results of all investigations of possible causes of heterogeneity among study results.	NA
	20d	Present results of all sensitivity analyses conducted to assess the robustness of the synthesized results.	NA
Reporting biases	21	Present assessments of risk of bias due to missing results (arising from reporting biases) for each synthesis assessed.	NA
Certainty of evidence	22	Present assessments of certainty (or confidence) in the body of evidence for each outcome assessed.	NA
DISCUSSION			
Discussion	23a	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence.	Pg. 11
	23b	Discuss any limitations of the evidence included in the review.	Pg. 13
	23c	Discuss any limitations of the review processes used.	Pg. 13
	23d	Discuss implications of the results for practice, policy, and future research.	Pg. 13-14
OTHER INFORMATION			
Support	25	Describe sources of financial or non-financial support for the review, and the role of the funders or sponsors in the review.	Pg. 15
Competing interests	26	Declare any competing interests of review authors.	Pg. 15
Availability of data, code and other materials	27	Report which of the following are publicly available and where they can be found: template data collection forms; data extracted from included studies; data used for all analyses; analytic code; any other materials used in the review.	NA