

Supplementary File 1

Search Strategies

Context: Sub-Saharan Africa encompasses a vast and diverse region, with 48 countries stretching from the southern tip of South Africa to the shores of Morocco. Here's a breakdown of the major sub-regions within Sub-Saharan Africa:

West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

Central Africa: Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe

East Africa: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda

Southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe

I. PubMed:

Research Question 1:

- ("COVID-19"[MeSH] OR "SARS-CoV-2"[MeSH]) AND ("mental health"[MeSH] OR "well-being" OR "health" OR "welfare") AND ("Africa, Sub-Saharan"[MeSH] OR "Sub-Saharan Africa")
- ("COVID-19 pandemic"[MeSH] OR "COVID lockdown"[MeSH]) AND ("mental health services"[MeSH] OR "mental health treatment") AND ("Africa, Sub-Saharan"[MeSH] OR "Sub-Saharan Africa")

Research Question 2:

- ("COVID-19 pandemic"[MeSH] OR "COVID lockdown"[MeSH]) AND ("mental health patients"[MeSH] OR "mental health treatment") AND ("support"[MeSH] OR "best practices") AND ("Africa, Sub-Saharan"[MeSH] OR "Sub-Saharan Africa")

Research Question 3:

- ("COVID-19 pandemic"[MeSH] OR "COVID lockdown"[MeSH]) AND ("mental health services"[MeSH] OR "mental health policy") AND ("Africa, Sub-Saharan"[MeSH] OR "Sub-Saharan Africa")

II. Google Scholar:

Research Question 1:

- "COVID-19" ("mental health" OR "well-being" OR "health" OR "welfare") "Sub-Saharan Africa"
- "COVID-19 pandemic" OR "COVID lockdown" ("mental health services" OR "mental health treatment") "Sub-Saharan Africa"

Research Question 2:

- "COVID-19 pandemic" OR "COVID lockdown" ("mental health patients" OR "mental health treatment") "support" OR "best practices" "Sub-Saharan Africa"

Research Question 3:

- "COVID-19 pandemic" OR "COVID lockdown" ("mental health services" OR "mental health policy") "Sub-Saharan Africa"

III. WHO Website:

- Use the WHO Global Health Library search engine with similar keywords and operators as in PubMed or Google Scholar.
- Focus on resources related to mental health, pandemics, and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Browse relevant WHO publications, reports, and guidelines.

Steps:

- Use the WHO thesaurus to find relevant keywords and subject terms.
- Check the WHO country profiles for specific information on mental health services in Sub-Saharan African countries.

IV. Government Websites:

- Search the websites of Ministries of Health or Mental Health in individual Sub-Saharan African countries.
- Use keywords related to your research questions and the specific country you are interested in.
- Search for policy documents, reports, and resources on mental health services during the COVID pandemic.