Reviewer’s report

**Title:** Late-life depression and quality of life in a geriatric evaluation and management unit: An observational study

**Version:** 4  **Date:** 11 March 2014

**Reviewer:** Amanda Grenier

**Reviewer’s report:**

Thank you for the opportunity to review this manuscript.

The authors make an important contribution in highlighting the extent of depression experienced by older adults in a geriatric evaluation and management unit. The study is well-defined and comprehensive. The prevalence of depression is the crux of this paper, and represents a very good contribution to the literature. They rightly point to account for and treat depression through design and implementation of targeted interventions (even if short-term).

I was less convinced by the component of measuring Quality of Life in this hospital population, especially considering the short duration of stay. The paper could stand alone in measuring the extent of depression rather than necessarily linking depression with QOL. However, the field does tend to measure QOL- and the study carries this out with a large sample, and using appropriate instruments.

I would have liked to see an expanded discussion of the importance of this prevalence of depression and suggested pathways for further exploration (level of education, etc). Another avenue is perhaps the implication that impairment has on the perception of self and perceived health.

My suggestion is for minor essential revisions.

Below are suggested revisions:

The use of 'observational' in the title seems to imply observational methods. Would the term 'exploratory study' be more appropriate? Perhaps this is a reflection of differences in the terms used in the authors discipline of psychiatry.

The summary does not read as clearly as the article, and there are some awkward turns of phrase and structure. In the background summary section, the last sentence 'this study aimed to...' should be move to the first line. The first sentence of the results section (summary) could be revised.

Clarification needed. On page 4- "the prevalence of LLD ranges from 10%-40%...". is this 10% in the general population or among older people?

On page 6- 'we hoped to explore' should be made more definitive...we explored? we measured...using -- instruments?
On page 6 - the sample cites 471 patients in a facility that has 18 beds. This implies a quick turnover - which is later confirmed. I would suggest including the average duration of stay in the description of the study participants.

Although beyond the scope of the study, I wondered about the cultural interpretations that older people may make with regards to being 'ill or impaired' and if this somewhat impacts their level of self rated health (QOL) or levels of depression.

On page 11 the article states 'promotes disability'. I am not entirely sure that this is what is meant. Please clarify.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests