Reviewer's report

Title: The prevalence of anxiety and depression in patients with age-related macular degeneration: A systematic review of observational study data

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Reviewer: barry rovner

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Dawson and colleagues conducted a systematic review of observational studies concerning prevalence rates of depression and anxiety in persons with age-related macular degeneration (AMD). The manuscript nicely describes its review methodology and its limitations. The authors also note the methodological limitations of existing studies and the resulting difficulty estimating prevalence rates of depression and anxiety (in particular). Nevertheless, the review finds, at least for depression, higher rates in persons with AMD than in the general population.

The following suggestions/comments may improve the manuscript:

1. Please describe in greater detail the most commonly used depression and anxiety scales, at least those that were used in the highest quality studies. This will give readers a better sense of what is being measured.

2. Please cite prevalence rates of depression and anxiety in the general population. Although there is some mention of this in the Discussion, it will be useful to have this made more explicit earlier. Some of the references for this are dated; more current epidemiological studies are available.

3. Please mention that prevalence rates of psychiatric symptoms are likely to be different in community compared to clinical settings.

4. In the comparison of prevalence rates of depression in persons with AMD and to non-AMD suffers, it is not clear if the comparison group is comprised of persons with other vision disorders or community samples. This refers to when the authors write, “Prevalence of depressive symptoms in adults with AMD was higher than those without.” It would be helpful to know who comprised the control group. (page 10).

5. Although the cited studies found a relationship between severity of vision loss and depression, other studies, not cited here because a different methodology was used, have not found that relationship. Please consider citing, Zhang, Xinzhi et al. JAMA Ophthalmology131: 573-581, 2013.

6. Please spell out CBT.

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests
Quality of written English: Acceptable

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'