Reviewer’s report

Title: Yoga for schizophrenia: A systematic review and meta-analysis

Version: 3 Date: 11 October 2012

Reviewer: Angus MacBeth

Reviewer’s report:

Major compulsory revisions
The authors provide an interesting overview of the literature on yoga in schizophrenia. They provide systematic review and meta-analytic evidence to suggest that there is insufficient evidence to recommend yoga as a routine intervention in schizophrenia. This runs contrary to Vancampfort et al’s (2012) findings.

The major limitation of the paper as it stands is the application of meta-analysis to the data set. Individual meta-analyses are conducted on at most 3 studies, and in one occasion (Cognitive function) on only one study of n=119. The small number of studies, small samples and substantial heterogeneity of methodologies, measures, diagnostics etc. makes the resulting estimates derived from the meta-analysis highly unstable. Therefore, it is difficult to meaningfully draw any conclusions from the meta-analysis, thus the advantage of including meta-analysis in addition to a systematic review is lost. Similarly, sub-group and sensitivity analyses are compromised by the small number of studies.

That said, the rigorous review of the different studies does seem a useful contribution, both extending the scope of, and adding a useful counterpoint to the Vancampfort review. I suggest the authors remove the meta-analysis and concentrate on a systematic review of the methodological and sampling differences in the studies. For instance, the investigation of bias suggests that the identified studies are largely skewed by methodological bias. Effectively, this would involve using the same headings as the meta-analysis but creating a narrative description of the studies and their differences rather than a quantitative synthesis.

Discretionary revisions
The authors could also use a systematic review format to discuss theoretical links between yoga and other non-pharmacological interventions that are under evaluation for schizophrenia. For instance, mindfulness based techniques would be relevant here.

Level of interest: An article of limited interest

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