Reviewer's report

Title: Cognitive behavioural therapy for the treatment of depression in people with multiple sclerosis: a systematic review

Version: 2
Date: 8 November 2013

Reviewer: Sally Askey-Jones

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Title: Cognitive behavioural therapy for the treatment of depression in people with multiple sclerosis: a systematic review

Date: 8/11/2013

Thank you for allowing me to review this interesting and important manuscript.

The authors completed a systematic review and meta-analysis to evaluate the efficacy of cognitive behavioural therapy in the MS population with seven studies being eligible for inclusion.

The rationale for the study is clear and the question posed by the authors is an important one given that approximately 50% of people with MS will experience depression across their lifetime and that rates of suicide appear to be higher than the general population. Depression is treatable for many people with MS, yet is often undiagnosed and untreated in clinical practice.

The data appears to be sound.

Key words are appropriate.

The writing is acceptable, although there are one or two errors that will require correction before publication.

Search terms are also appropriate in the supplementary file.

Major Compulsory revisions

It would be helpful if the authors altered their title to reflect that the manuscript is a systematic review and meta-analysis.

Does a review protocol exist? If so, please mention this in the methods section.

Was the systematic review registered with PROSPERO? If so, a statement needs to reflect this, with the registration number attached.

The authors should refer directly to the PRISMA statement so as to enable readers to appreciate the importance of adhering to minimum standards of reporting for systematic reviews and meta-analyses.
They could also attach the PRISMA checklist as an additional file.

Search Strategy is acceptable – used 3 databases but wondered why they didn’t use EMBASE or CINAHL as well? Unclear if they checked grey or unpublished literature?

Selection Criteria – The inclusion and exclusion criteria are clear and justifiable, although it is not clear in the selection section whether they included studies with a particular length of follow-up.

Minor Essential Revisions

The writing is of excellent quality and is clear and concise. However, there are minor errors that require correction and these are listed below:

P15 – I² – I assume the authors meant I²?
P19 – Lines 3-7 – can this sentence be restructured?

The Flow diagram (figure 1) needs to follow the PRISMA template and this needs to be labelled correctly.

Discretionary Revisions

The introduction is well written and concise, however it may be worth the authors elaborating about how Multiple Sclerosis affects people generally before discussing depression for the wider readership of BMC Psychiatry.

The authors allude to the word “sufferer” several times throughout the text, but the term “people with MS” may be more appropriate.

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

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

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

No competing interests