Reviewer's report

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

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Reviewer: Cecilia Sighinolfi

Reviewer's report:

This is a well conducted and clear review which addresses the important topic of the psychological treatment of depression in people with multiple sclerosis. The question posed by the authors is well defined and the data are sound. Three recent studies were added since the previous Cochrane Review (Thomas et al., Psychological interventions for multiple sclerosis. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2006) on this topic.

I have some minor essential comments relating to the paper.

#1 Abstract
The background should reflect what the context and rationale of the study is and not state the aim which could be a separate sub-heading (objectives). Moreover the authors may want to further specify the search methods and to clarify which type of studies were eligible for inclusion.

#2 Background
There are too many references very old (for example: 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 19, 20, 23, 28) which should be replaced with more up to date sources of information.

#3 Methods
The methods overall are well-structured. However, the authors (referring to the PRISMA guidelines for reporting systematic reviews and meta-analysis), may want to described the eligibility criteria reporting types of studies, participants, interventions and outcome measures were considered for inclusion, before describing the literature search. In the Selection section, the reader may find it helpful that clear criteria for inclusion and exclusion of the studies are stated.

#4 Synthesis
In the presentation of the meta-analyses' results, the authors reported that when the outlier study (46) was removed the all between study variation could be explained by the chance alone. I feel that the reader may find it helpful a further explanation of this results, with some suggestions about the characteristics of the study that make it so different from the others.

#5 References are missing in several points of the manuscript:
Line 5 page 6: the reference to the Cochrane Handbook is missing;
Line 5 page 8: authors described where the studies were undertook, but they did not report the references (which studies has been conducted in UK? Which ones in US and which one in Australia?)

Line 7 page 8: the authors described 5 studies but in line 10 (page 8) they reported 4 references only;

Line 5 page 12: references 45 and 46 are supposed to relate to the “two studies” reported in line 3; if so they should be insert before the “;” (line 5) and not after. Moreover, the references relating to “the other five studies) are missing.

#6 Tables and Figures

Figure 1: the flow-chart of the selection process is adequately reported, however reasons for the 19 excluded studies should be added.

Tables 1, 2, 3: I feel the reader may benefit from the inclusion of the Country in the description of the studies (for example: Larcombe (1984), country)

The authors report clear conclusions, discussed results implications for clinical practice and presented suggestions for further researches which should overcome the number of methodological limitations of the current studies emerged from the review.

The paper is generally well written, well organized and well reasoned. There are some revisions that would improve the paper and allow the reader more clarity on findings.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

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