Reviewer's report

Title: Psychological treatment of depression: A meta-analytic database of randomized studies

Version: 2 Date: 13 January 2008

Reviewer: Toshiaki A Furukawa

Reviewer's report:

General

The authors report on their database of 149 RCTs that they have examined and extracted data from, regarding psychological treatment of depression, while they themselves were doing several meta-analyses on this disorder. In the first place, it is laudable that the authors have conducted thorough literature search and built this database. In the second place, it is even more laudable that the authors have made up their mind to make their database publicly available in BMC.

Major compulsory revisions

None

Minor essential revisions

I do not share the other reviewer's concerns that whatever errors, especially with regard to effect size, would be repeated numerous times if future researchers want to use this database, because each specific systematic review and meta-analysis requires specific research question(s) and specific formats to extract data. I presume that this database will be useful as a starting point for a systematic review, i.e. at the stage of study selection in the process of a systematic review, and not at the stage of data extraction; all systematic reviewers will need to do that on their own, in accordance with the specific clinical question that they want to answer.

Having said this, I am not sure if averaging effect sizes when several outcome measures were reported is statistically sensible. Can we seek a statistician's advice for this?

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.
Declaration of competing interests:

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