Author's response to reviews

Title: HIV Behavioural Interventions Targeted Towards Older Adults: a Systematic Review

Authors:

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Version: 4 Date: 16 September 2013

Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Prof. Latkin and Ms. Dalumpines,

Response to second set of reviewer comments re: manuscript “HIV Behavioural Interventions Targeted Towards Older Adults: a Systematic Review”

The reviewer has offered some discretionary revisions. We have reviewed the comments and have struggled a bit to understand how best to action them. Please see our response below.

Reviewer: India Butler

Discretionary Revisions:

- In my opinion, this review would be more clinically useful if the issues unique to HIV infected older adults that may be addressed by non-pharmacological interventions (some have been identified in the background literature review e.g. increasing prevalence, delayed diagnosis, poor knowledge, high-risk behaviour, social and psychological concerns, co-morbidities and functional impairment etc) were better related to the studies reviewed. This would also highlight the gaps in the literature.
- Currently the review is difficult to read as the issues are identified in the background and then the studies and interventions are listed separately in the discussion and the tables without a way of easily linking the two.
- I would find it easier to use the information if in the discussion the issue and existing interventions about that specific issue were directly compared e.g. high risk behaviour followed by a summary of the interventional studies related to this and the success of the interventions and then a comment about what is lacking in the data.

We have added a column to table 1 to clearly outline the “focus area” of each of the 12 included studies. These focus areas are directly in line with the areas outlined in the introduction and methods: treatment adherence, HIV testing, knowledge, risk behaviour, social/physical support, coping and referral for care. We also note paragraph three of the results which outlines these results in detail.

We also restructured the results section a bit to group the interventions focused on the focus areas as outlined above. So the flow is a bit more clear and along the lines of the reviewer’s suggestion.

We have not moved the gaps from the discussion to the results section preferring rather to keep a traditional structure of presenting results separately from a discussion of the implications of the findings. We feel that changing the results section to include a discussion would make the paper more unnecessarily difficult to follow.
Yours sincerely,

Joel Negin
On behalf of authorship team